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M. D. Gordon



Open for now

HOMELY PICTURES

IN VERSE,

CHIEFLY OF A DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

BY

JOHN YOUNG,

Author of "Lays from the Poorhouse," and "Lays from the Ingle Nook."

GLASGOW :

GEORGE GALLIE, 99 BUCHANAN STREET.

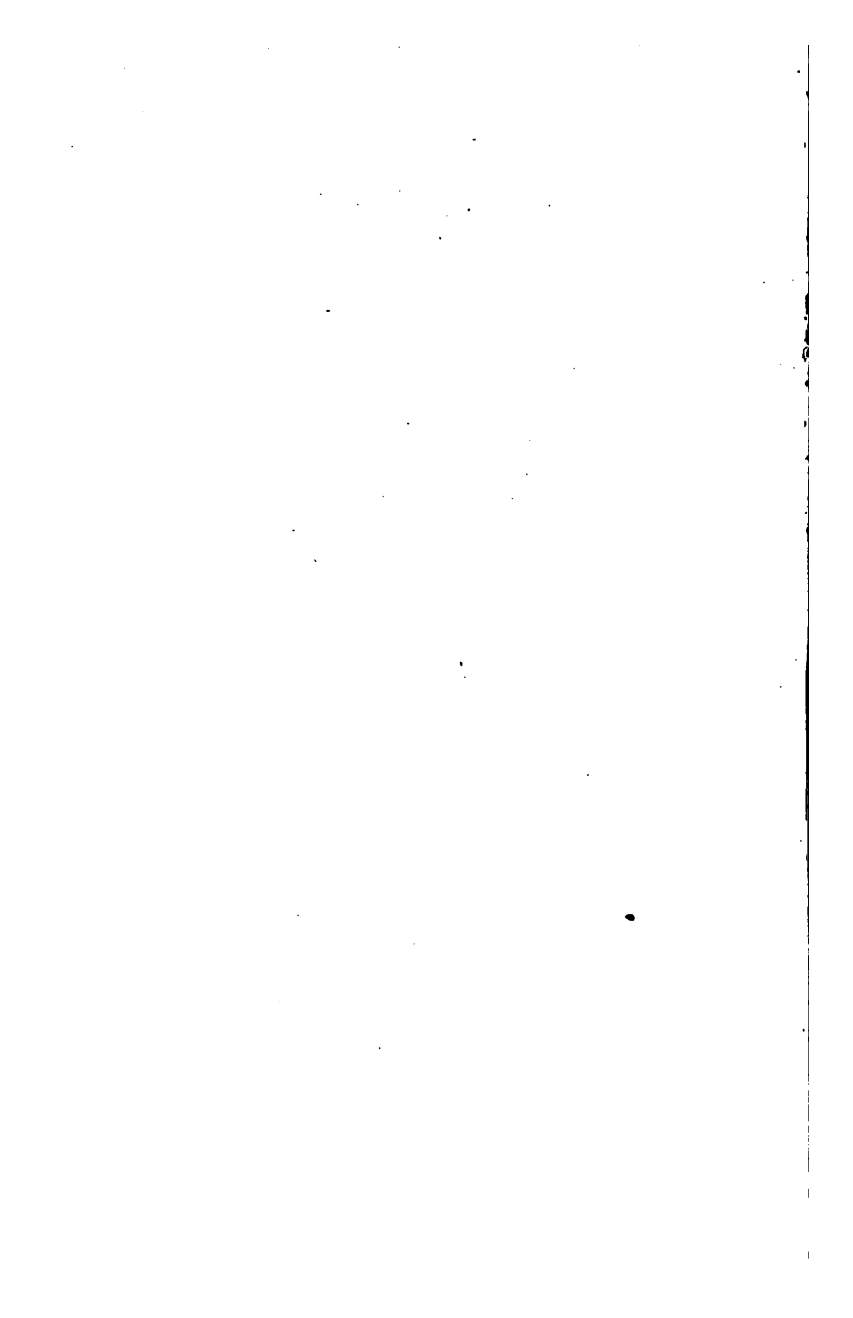
1865.



H. Nisbet, Printer, 164 Trongate, Glasgow.

TO
MY VENERABLE FRIEND,
MRS JANET HAMILTON,
POETESS, LANGLOAN,
I Dedicate this Little Volume,
IN TOKEN OF THE
ESTEEM AND FILIAL AFFECTION WHICH I ENTERTAIN FOR HER
PRIVATE CHARACTER, AND HEART-FELT APPRECIATION
OF HER LITERARY ATTAINMENTS.

JOHN YOUNG.



P R E F A C E .

IN craving for this, my Third Volume, a kindly reception at the hands of a generous Public, I may be permitted to inform such of my readers as may now make my acquaintance for the first time, that the following pages are not the product of my vacant leisure; but, if I may so speak, they are the hopefully sown, diligently cultivated, and gratefully reaped fruit of earnest work-day labour.

An indulgent Critic, in the course of his remarks on my last Volume—"Lays from the Ingle Nook"—says, "We commend the Author's tastes, and if they do not interfere with graver pursuits, we would not forbid his indulgence of a by no means despicable Muse."

I can assure my readers that neither in my former volumes nor in the present, is there anything that has resulted from an interference with graver pursuits. For other pursuits than the diligent cultivation of my humble literary talents, Providence has made me unfit. I am all but totally blind, and my right hand is so maimed that, save for holding the pen (which I manage to do between the two forefingers), it is almost useless, thus entirely disabling me for the prosecution of my former occupation, which was that of a carter. These physical disabilities, I may state, are the results of an accidental burning, which occurred to me in February, 1853. To my readers previously unacquainted with me, I mention these facts by way of bespeaking their kind reception of my book. I do not murmur at my lot. There is much that alleviates my condition, for which I desire to be grateful. My previous volumes have been kindly received by the critics, and I know they have sold well. Once an inmate of the poorhouse, I am now, thanks to my generous patrons, in the enjoyment of domestic felicity, and able to pay my quota to the parish rates! Indeed, I had not long attained to the parochial

franchise before I was called upon to pay for my freedom the sum of two shillings and sixpence (I believe there was also an odd penny or halfpenny), in the shape of poor's rates. Nor can I be sufficiently grateful to the Giver of all good for having spared to me, through much trouble and suffering, the dear partner of my bosom, without whose confiding affection, encouraging smile, and unflagging industry, I never could have attained to my present position, humble as it is.

To say that my poetical effusions, past and present, are not enriched with the ornate graces of scholarship, the fadeless blooms of Poesy, and the lofty flights of an aspiring Fancy, is to say what must be patent to the most cursory of readers. The very utmost that I can hope for them is, that they may be found to be permeated with a few grains of mother wit, combined with a sprinkling of sound common-sense, and, haply, lit up here and there with but "*ae* spark o' Nature's fire." At the same time, it will be cheering for me to learn from my friends the Critics that the contents of the present volume have been benefitted, however slightly, by the society of a few well-informed letter-backed cronies of mine, now tenanting a certain square box in a certain corner of my dwelling. Of this, at least, I am certain—the lack of such cronies was a sad hindrance to my welfare at the outset of my humble career as an Author.

Tendering my hearty thanks to my patrons for past and present favours, may I hope that these my "*Homely Pictures*" will ensure me the continuance of their support.

1 SWAN LANE, PORT-DUNDAS,
GLASGOW, Dec., 1864.

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HOMELY PICTURES.

SAD NEW YEAR MEMORIES.

ANITHER Towmont wi' auld age
Had noo gat ūnca frail;
December wins, in eerie moans,
His end seemed to bewail.
And as that end still nearer drew,
Their grief still mair upon them grew,
Till sune their sorrows dire burst forth,
An agonizing gale.

The carlin's sell seemed awfu laith
The fiat to obey,
An' battled fiercely wi' grim Death;
But, och! it wadna dae:
The tyrant hurled at him his dart,
An' struck him in the vital part,
Syne, wi' ae strang convulsive sab,
The Auld Year passed away.

Joined noo the wins wi' eldritch skreichs,
Auld Ocean's sullen roar;
Oaks that for centuries had stuid,
Quiver'd, and earthwards tore,

As sped, at length, fu' cannily
The Auld Year to his destiny,
The while his waitin' son and heir
Was landed on oor shore.

Thus raved the elemental dirge
O'er the departed year,
And echoed wi' a doom's-day wail
In his successor's ear ;
Whilk made the wee thing sab and greet,
As if some dyle it shrank to meet,
That the dark future had enclosed
Within its destined sphere.

But to dispel its quakin' fears,
The jovial sons o' men
Threw ope their hospitable doors,
An' bade it toddle ben ;
Till by the bleezin' ingle neuk
It sune had quite anither leuk,
An' seemed to think, that hap what micht,
'Twad aiblins mak' a fen'.

They plied it weel wi' usquebae,
They fiddled, danced, an' sang,
Till e'en the roof o' cot an' ha'
Wi' merry daffin rang ;
They tauld it o' its auld forbears,
They hooted it oot o' its fears,
Till, haith ! the younker courage took,
Grew bauld apace an' strang.

But sic young birkies, like the lave
O' pilgrims 'neath the sun,
Maun be resigned to tak' a share
O' dule as weel as fun.
An' mony sad, sad mem'ries rise,
An' mony bitter wailin' cries,
In human hearts, as ilk New Year
Its journey has begun.

'Tis sae aneath a cosy biel
In Clutha's bonnie dell,
Whaur balmy breaths an' simmer joys
Seem fain for aye to dwell;
But whaur, as if in canker'd spleen,
Lo'es Winter to lay waste the scene,
There sits a hoary-headed dame
Listenin' the Auld Year's knell.

Yet 'tisna by hersel' she sits,
This dame o' mony years,
But roun' her hearth she has a ring
O' crackie, kind compeers.
For half a lifetime 'twad appear
They've watched the dawn o' ilka year
By that same hearth, a' fain to aid
Peggie her waes to bear.

Auld Peggie Gordon o' the Glen,
Owre whase deep furrowed broo
Hae sped, nigh-haun, four-score-an'-ten
O' towmonts auld and new,

As opes anither o' her years,
Pours into sympathisin' ears
Her flood o' bitter memories
Sprung fresh afore her view.

True, the auld say, Affliction mak's
Ilk ane o' Adam's seed
The sibber grow; an' thae auld folks
Fin't to be sae indeed.
'Neath that ae roof, four human hearts
Hae struck been by Affliction's darts;
But Peggie has been sairest pierc'd,
An' maun the free'st bleed.

"Anither year, my faithfu' frien's,
Has creepit owre us a',
Sin' roun' this hearth kind sympathy
Did us thegither draw.
An' noo the vail, ne'er closely drawn,
Has, by Auld Time's unsparin' haun,
Been screiv't aside, that Memory's e'e
Her sorrows micht reca'.

"'Twas sic anither morn as this,
Or, differ't it in ocht,
It was a blacker, fiercer storm
That my great sorrow wrocht.
Nae starns lit up the murky licht—
Hail showers rush'd by in blindin' drift—
The wild storm-furies were abroad,
Destroyin', sparin' nocht.

“The lonely cot, an’ lordly ha’,
Wi’ fleesum joy they tirl’t—
Byres, stables, barns, oot-hooses, sheds,
To earth they madly hurl’t.
The groanin’ trees they strippit bare—
The oury cattle’s winter fare,
Lichtly, as ’twere as mickle caff,
They skywards tost an’ swirl’t.

“ Heard were the craws, when lulled the blast,
Caw hoarsely noo an’ then—
Cam waefu’ bleat o’ yowe an’ lamb
Frae bare hillside an’ pen;
The eagle in his shelter’d neuk,
Within his ancient eyrie shock,
While Clutha’s strife wi’ bank an’ brae
Cam’ soughin down the glen.

“ I hae a richt to hirp an’ murn
Owre that death-dealin’ blast,
That frae my haun at ae full sweep,
My joy-cup fiercely dash’d;
Tho’ ye wha strive to comfort me,
Yersels hae need o’ sympathy;
Sin’ ’bout your yae devoted heads,
That storm in fury lashed.

“ Still, ye maun own the cruel stroke
Fell sairest far on me,
E’en tho’ it sever’d frae yer sides
Yer bloomin’ lassocks three;

For on that fearfu' morn I lost,
(O, God, what earthly pleasures cost!)
My roof-tree an' three pillars strong,
 'Mid wildest agony.

“ I pled wi' them to stay at hame,
 That nicht at ony price;
I pointed to the clud-cast lift,
 But they'd tak' nae advice:
That nicht within our auld burg-hall,
Blin' Charlie had his yearly ball,
An' they wi' the licht-fitted ban',
 Maun mingle in a trice.

“ The sire an' his three buirdly sons
 A' liked the fiddle weel,
An' few bows wi' my ain guidman
 Could play strathspey or reel.
To Charlie he his word had passed
To play for him that nicht a cast,
An' as their faither be't to gang,
 Sae maun his callans leal.

“ I think I see them as they skipt
 The flair-heid owre sae licht—
Their gracefu' gaits, their manly forms,
 Are never frae my sight.
Their faither played in this same chair,
While they danced till his fav'rite air
Ere they set oot, ne'er to return,
 That mirky mornless nicht.

“ When they were gane I couldna rest,
But wan’ert but an’ ben,
The while my trouble-broodin’ thochts
Convoyed them up the glen.
I couldna win abune’t ava,
That ill was brewin’ for us a’,
Yet watna that it wad hae brocht
Wi’t sic a fearfu’ en’.

“ I saw them reach the howe loan-head,
An’ mak’ to cross the fuird,
But Clutha’s snawy tappit flood
The stappin stanes had smoor’d.
Yet still I thoct they managed thro’
An’ sune auld burg-toun met their view,
Whaur for the dance I saw my bairns
Wi’ yer three kimmers paired.

“ Syne for a blink dark thochts gied place
To sights o’ sunny hue ;
I thoct I stuid in auld burg-ha’
While fast the dancers flew :
I saw an’ heard nae little praise
Gien to oor man for his strathspeys,
Whilk wi’ a guidwife’s honest pride,
I kent was but his due.

“ Oor parish, na, oor shire had sent
That nicht their beauty there,
An’ mony a lo’esome gallant twa
Gaed skelpin ’lang the flair.

Young limbs were lithe, young heads were light,
Young hearts were won an' lost that nicht,
While present joy an' future bliss
Smiled on ilk lovin' pair.

“ I saw oor young anes tak' the lead
In ilka reel an' dance,
An' mair than ae dusht starn I saw
Twinkle on them askance :
I saw them—was't wi' partial e'e—
Frae oor burg monarch bear the gree,
His princes an' princesses three,
Bred tho' they'd been in France.

“ Sae crept the heavy-fitted hours
O' that black ne'ar-day morn,
Within my bosom howp an' fear
Alternate bein' born.
And O ! wha kens what I endured
As howp was still by fear devoured,
Or wi' what blank uncertainty
My racket saul was torn.

“ While thus crawl't on the infant year,
An' louder howl'd the win,
The hail-drift down the chimla pour't
Soughin' wi eerie din.
This shelter'd biggin, quake fan' I,
As ilka blast rushed roarin' by ;
But ah ! the storm withoot was nocht
To that whilk raged within.

“ As struck that auld nock-hammer sax,
It pierced me to the soul,—
My cloak I owre my shouthers flang—
Nae langer could I thole.
I was resolv’t the warst to ken,
An’ hurry’t wildly up the glen ;
Nor howlin’ wins nor driftin’ hail
My progress could control.

“ Auld Clutha’s noisy banks I reach,
But whaur the fuird should be
A troop o’ foaming crested waves
Are battlin’ sullenly.
I see it maun be to my loss
Gin I their ire attempt to cross,
Sae, seek the brig abune the linn,
Tho’ distant lang miles threë.

“ I sune reach the familiar spot—
But O! the fell despair—
The tell-tale wrack the storm has left
Is a’ that I see there.
Ye ken, my friens, what happen’t next,
An’ wha ’twas gat me there transfix’d,
Gazin’ the desolation through
Wi’ idiotic stare.

“ Ye ken hoo lang I stricken was
As if in death I lay,—
And O! hoo earnestly sin’ then
I’ve wish’d it had been sae.

Ilk sense lay dormant, stiff an' chill,
The shatter'd pulse was a' but still,
An' yet the flickering lamp o' life
Shed forth a quiverin' ray.

"I i' the frozen keep o' Death
Seemed to the human e'e,
Yet, ah! hoo present was I then
Wi' my great misery.
The cranreuch o' oblivion hoar
My cauld, cauld heart was hoverin' o'er,
Yet O! hoo keenly fan' that heart
Its ain wild agony.

"An' whan I woke to ootward things,
Some wise heids thocht it fit
To deem me craz'd, an' mair than ane
Wad hae me silly yet!
But can their wise pates e'er explain
Hoo 'twas, when life seemed frae me gane,
I saw ilk feature o' my wae
Aroun' me ever flit?

"An' has their wisdom e'er made oot
Hoo 'twas that I could tell,
As far as they hae come to licht,
Hoo ilka thing befell—
Ay, stap for stap, on that dark morn,
Whan my life-stoups were frae me torn,
An' I in widowhood sae drear
Was left alane to dwell?

“ Na, na ! they never can explain
Hoo, seemingly in death—
Whan that auld mirror’s shinin’ face
Pass’d stainless owre my breath—
I had my treasures i’ my view
As plainly’s ye’re afore me noo ;—
An’ yet, O yet I couldna save
Them frae the awfu’ scaith !

“ While prostrate here, for days I lay
Still as the voiceless grave,
I guard kept owre my auld guidman
An’ my three callans brave ;
I saw them, as I said before,
Skelp cleverly alang the floor,
And e’ed them wi’ a mither’s pride,
Excellin’ a’ the lave.

“ I watch’d them a’ wi’ greatfu’ heart,
Whan roun’ the bottle cam,
My manfu’ callans an’ their sire
Pass by the proffer’t dram ;
While ithers then, I could divine,
Wi’ drink gat beastly as the swine,
An’ chiels, ance pliable an’ kind,
Gat thrawart as a ram.

“ ’Twas fear they micht forget themsels,
Puir me sae anxious made,
That on that scowlin’ Hogmanay
At hame they wad ha’ stayed ;

And unca blithe was I to see
 Them shun the wily barleybree—
 Black source o' muckle care an' dule
 An' waes o' fellest grade.

“ I saw the dance break up at length,
 An' ilk pair hamewards gang,
 But there was only three for me
 'Mang a' that happy thrang.
 I saw my auld man lead the way,
 While hame my braw sons wad convey
 Their partners safe, syne bring me back
 My laddies hale an' strang.

“ I'd gart him promise ne to leave
 My callans i' the toun,
 But to return them to my heart
 Niest mornin' safe an' soun':
 No that I feared, in ony way,
 They'd either gang or lead astray;
 But ah! the mither's yearnin' heart
 Is jealous o' ilk boon.

“ But noo the wins, wi' gatherin' power,
 In ire broke wildy forth,
 And black storm-clouds wi' awsum scowl,
 Cam' drivin' up the north;
 The woods began their eerie moan—
 Sure sign a blast was comin' on—
 While hame-gaun roisterers frae the dance
 Gied owre their thochtless mirth.

“Pled noo yer lassocks wi’ my bairns,
As lassocks only can,
That they wad stay till mornin’ licht—
But, na, gae hame they maun :
They kent I wad be thinking lang
For them at hame, sae hame they’ll gang—
Then, they’d gang wi’ them, an’ tho’ laith,
Ye yielded to the plan.

“Ye charged them no to cross the fuird,
But gang roun’ by the brig ;
They promised—syne wi’ dauntless hearts,
Set to the road fu’ trig.
Noo, side for side, an’ arm in arm,
They joke an’ bauldly face the storm,
While their auld faither strides afore,
Fu’ sturdily an big.

“Thus speed they on—whiles i’ their face,
Whiles at their back the win ;
But driven back, or blawn agee,
Still scorned they to gie in.
They’re drawin’ near auld Clutha’s side,
An’ hear the moanin’ o’ his tide,
While rustlin’ through his plantins bare,
Comes muckle soughin din.

“They’ve gained the brig—unwonted sicht,
Gleams forth the lichtnin’s flash :
Unwonted soun’ at sic a time,
Loud roars the thunder crash :

Athwart the troubled vault o' heaven
 Black-crested warrior cluds are driven ;
 They strive, till 'tween the murky hosts,
 There opes a lurid gash,

“ Frae whilk, O God ! a fiery dart
 Is earthwards hurried prone,
 Strikes the auld brig—it reels—gies way,
 And a' wi't then upon :
 Doun, doun they to destruction drift—
 The thunder roars, red gleams the lift—
 Help ! help !—they near't—are owre the linn,
 Are gone !—for ever gone !

“ O God, was't thy ain lichtnin's flash
 That dimmed thy pitying eye ?
 Thine ear, was't deafened wi' the crash
 O' thunder rollin' by ?
 Was thy all-present powerful arm
 Palsied amid the howling storm ?
 Had thy preserving hand gat weak
 'Mid sic wild revelry ?

“ Forgie ! forgie, O God, the thocht—
 'Twas sinfu', 'twas profane,
 The offspring o' a broken heart
 And a distracted brain.
 I but a worm am o' the dust,
 Thou art eternal, guid, an' just ;
 An' David-like, I'se trust Thee still,
 Tho' I by Thee be slain.

“ An’ friens, forgie this selfish grief;
Ye likewise suffer’d sair,
Tho’ ye but lost ae flow’r a-piece,
While I was strippet bare.
Ye still hae bairns to comfort left,
While I am o’ my a’ bereft,
Nane o’ my ain to press my broo,
Or snod my auld gray hair.

“ Sad pilgrim i’ this vale o’ tears,
I staucher on my lane;
Strang arm to lean upon, or haun
To guide me, I hae nane.
Yet there’s a powerfu’ haun abune,
That to auld Peggie raxes down,
An’ reds her path o’ mony a thorn
And ngsome, trippin’ stane.

“ Ay, thanks be unto Jacob’s God,
My comforts are nae scant;
Nor fails my saul at morn and e’en
A gratefu’ sang to chant.
Nor lans, nor wealth o’ gear hae I,
But aye as muckle’s pits me by,
An’ whiles an awmus left to wair
On some weird bairn o’ want.

“ But, och ! it was a fearfu’ blow
That fell upon us a’;
An’ strive’s we may, I muckle doot,
We’ll ne’er win owre’t ava.

I ken we ocht to be resign'd,
 An' purest pleasure strive to find
 E'en i' the rod ; but human hearts
 Sma' pleasure there can draw.

“ But was't no truly byous strange,
 Hoo, whan I prostrate lay,
 I saw the horrors o' that scene
 Clear as the licht o' day ?
 An' whan the kintra-side was rais'd
 To seek our bairns, I, seemin' craz'd,
 Could airt them to the very cove
 Whaur bleach'd their lifeless clay.

“ Oh ! 'twas a wæfu' sicht indeed,
 To see three brawny arms
 Enclaspt about three winsome waists,
 Shieldin' their tender forms.
 Plichted to tread ilk ither's path,
 Destruction, envious, in wrath
 Might brawly blight their prospects fair,
 But farder couldna harm.

“ Bu' noo, as 'twere, their voos are pledg'd
 Wi' life's warm thrillin' breath,
 Anither moment sees them seal'd
 Wi' the cauld stamp o' death.
 Cozie as birdlins i' their nests,
 Three heads lie on three manly breasts,
 Whase ilka pulse short-syne had throbb'd,
 To shield them frae a' scaith.

" Short syne, thae young heads deftly planned
 Their comin' weddin' gear,
 Noo storm-tost Clutha's dreepin crown
 O' tangled weeds they wear.
 The bridal bed full in their view,
 The grave their bridal bed is noo,
 Whaur 'neath the blae rain-batter'd clod
 Ae clammy couch they share.

" The care-worn features o' the sire
 Brouned wi' the daurg o' life,
 Sae sternly set, sad story tell
 O' wild convulsive strife.
 That anxious heart sleeps soun'ly noo
 Fa'n that erect, braid, manly broo;
 Thae powerfu' arms toil for nae mair,
 Nor clasp a lovin' wife.

" E'en sae, e'en sae, an' were the blast
 That's roarin' noo sae bauld
 But lull'd a thocht we'se tak' ance mair—
 Slowly as fits the auld—
 Oor yearly dauner o' regard
 To yon lown neuk o' the kirkyard,
 And ask the Future whan we'll rest
 I' the same quiet hauld.

" We'll rain oor towmont's hoard o' tears
 Abune the wintry sod;
 We'll tell the slumberers below
 Hoo langsome's life's dull road:

But even there we'se no negleck
To strive an' boo the stubborn neck,
Assured He ne'er afflicts in vain,
That lays on us the load."

Thus Peggie Gordon o' the Glen
Will garrulously pour
Her waes into their frien'ly ears,
Wha shared her trials sore ;
And aye as mither Earth has run
The ither circuit roun' the sun,
She's seen them for amaist an age,
Sae met, thae waefu' four.

And aye's she leads in by the haun
Anither infant year,
She never fails to charge the bairn
Auld Peggie's tale to hear—
Just, I jalouse, to gie the boy
A taste o' grief as weel as joy,
No kennin what may be his lot
While in oor mundane sphere.

And I, a nameless rhymin' wicht,
Will lilt ilk new year's praise,
And it but tent auld Peggie weel
While it the sceptre sways—
Bid Spring 'mid yonder lone kirkyard
Wi' firstlin' gowans deck the sward,
Whaur sleep the sleepers 'roun whase couch
Auld Peggie's spirit strays.

An' when 'tis wi' the mission charged,
Bid its co-worker, Death,
Lay canny haun on Peggie's heart,
An' stowlins stap her breath ;
That dune, syne charge its son and heir
To guard the hallow'd spot wi' care,
An' let nae sacrilegious haun
Dae Peggie's ashes scaith.

THE AULD KIRKYARD:

A TALE OF A MITHER'S LOVE.

'Twas on a snell November morn,
Juist as the short-liv'd winter day
Had frae the grudgin' East been torn,
To cheer us wi' its beams sae gray,
That pensively I took my way,
Impell'd by some innate regard
On sic a mornin' to survey
The graves o' yonder auld kirkyard.

For tho' nor kith nor kin o' mine,
Sae far's I kent, lay mould'rin' there,
It lang had claim'd sic sma' propine
O' thocht as I could on it wair ;
And aft when Simmer's gen'rous care
Wi' flow'rets had begemm'd the sward,
And burdies vocal made the air,
I'd mused within the auld kirkyard.

But Winter noo was at his post,
 The flow'rs an' burdies a' were gane;
 E'en robin's sel fail'd to accost
 The Rhymer at the auld gravestane,
 Whaur aft my orra crumbs he'd ta'en.
 Braid snaw-flakes noo 'gan fa' amain,
 An' sune sic dazzlin' robes they spread
 As whitely drap'd, withouten stain,
 The silent homesteads o' the dead.

On sic a morn, 'mid sic a scene,
 There happen'd, on a date langsyne,
 What still to me is fresh an' green,
 An' mem'ry o't I'se never tynē.
 And aye sin' then, 'tis my opine,
 There lives within a mither's love
 For bairnies gane, a force divine,
 As this sma' incident may prove.

An auld ash tree stood i' the north
 O' this lone dwallin' o' the dead,
 Frae 'neath whase shade there peepit forth
 A bairnie's grave, wi' divots laid :
 Urn there was nane, but in its stead
 A waefu' mither sat an' mourn'd,
 An' thus the dolefu' plaint she made
 I into Doric verse hae turn'd.

“ My Willie, my wee croodlin' doo,
 I've come to shield thee frae the storm,
 Nor fell'est blast that ever blew
 Sall drive me hence nor dae thee harm ;

But as the maukin, in her form,
 Will guard her young e'en to the death,
 Sae sall I keep my Willie warm
 An' fend him frae this wintry scaith.

"They tell me that I'm craz'd, my bairn,
 The cozie ingle neuk to lea'
 At sic a time; but calm or storm,
 A' seasons are alike to me;
 And aft I'se bear thee company,
 Till Eastlan' breezes hither bring
 The cuckoo frae ayont the sea,
 To herald the return o' Spring.

"Syne here I'se plant the bonny bush—
 The white rose bush ye claim'd as yours,
 And sune 'twill shed a fragrant blush
 O'er Willie's nest, o' snawy flow'rs;
 An' burdies frae their leafy bow'rs
 Will sing their sweetest roun' thy head;
 An' blythe thou'st spen the lightsome hours,
 For oh! I canna think thee dead.

"Na, na, my bairn could ne'er forsake
 The mither wham he loved sae weel;
 Tho' stern reality, alake!
 Points downwards to the grave's cauld biel:
 And oh! the agony I feel,
 To think 'tis but thy lifeless clay
 I'm wailin' o'er wi' siccan zeal,
 An' that my Willie's gane for aye.

“ Ah, Death ! ’twas e’en a cruel blow
That cleft this doatin’ heart in twain ;
Sure, when thou laid my Willie low,
The mither, tae, thou micht hae ta’en :
For joy to me can ne’er again
Illume life’s path wi’ gladsome ray ;
But till thou tak’ me to my wean,
Thro’ darkness I maun grope my way.

“ Ay, rave awa, Boreas, rave,
Thy fiercest wrath I here defy ;
But spare, oh spare my Willie’s grave !
That ae wee spot glide lichtly by ;
An’ hear, O Death ! my saul’s loud cry,
My waes bring to a speedy close,
Till wi’ my peerless bairn I lie,
In painless, undisturb’d repose.

“ I’m tauld that I should e’en submit,
For sic is Heaven’s supreme commaun ;
But, och ! frail nature is na fit
Sic grief at a’ times to withstaun.
O God ! rax down Thy helpin’ haun,
An’ smooth my rugged path a-wee,
Till, safe in yonder tearless laun,
My Willie thou restore to me.

“ O Thou wha wast of woman born,
An’ for a mither’s waes canst feel,
Thou see’st hoo my puir heart is torn,
Nor wilt refuse the balm to heal :

Here on my Willie's grave I kneel,
And if 'tis sinfu', oh forgie !
But grant, oh ! grant my saul's appeal,
That sune I wi' my bairn may be."

'Twas dune!—Death twang'd his ready bow,
An' swift th' unswerving arrow sped
That brocht that yearning mither low,
An' life-warm clay embrac'd the dead ;
And ere three wintry days had fled
A mournin' husband led the bier,
An' wi' her Willie she was laid,
While thickly fell affection's tear.

An' when cauld wintry days ance mair
Had gane, an' Spring regladden'd earth,
A white rose bush was planted there,
An' shed its snawy blossoms forth ;
Fresh gowans frae the sod took birth,
An' burdies show'd a strange regard
To hatch their broods an' chant their mirth
In that neuk o' the auld kirkyard.

IN MEMORIAM.

JAMES RUSSELL, Currieside, Parish of Shotts. Born May 7,
1805; Died August 19, 1864.

FRAIL pilgrim o'er life's rugged way,
Hast reach'd the goal,
And cast all human ills for aye
From off thy soul;
And didst thou enter on thy rest
Calmly as child on mother's breast,
To find thy sufferings all redress'd,
Thy wounds made whole?

To tread affliction's thorny ways
Was thine full soon:
Ere yet the manhood of thy days
Had pass'd its noon,
Thou saw'st young life's fair prospects fade,
And each frail hope in ashes laid,
With nought but Heav'n to give thee aid,
In one small boon.

But, ah! 'twas in no stinted rate
Thou wast supplied
With that which to the worldly great
Is oft denied:
Tho' poor, and by affliction riven,
Grace to endure to thee was given,
So largely, that thou still in heaven
Seem'd to abide.

To thee, the lowly Nazarene
 A friend didst prove ;
Weak of thyself, thou learn'dst to lean
 Upon his love :
Of Him who made thee strong to stand,
Thy life was one long pæan grand,
Whose cadence each angelic band
 Echo'd above.

Fond mem'ry now possesses all
 That's left of thee ;
And dearly loves she to recall
 Thee back to me ;
While fancy, too, delights to trace
The features of thy honest face,
Where she beholds each Christian grace
 Blent pleasantly.

Methinks e'en now the sunny spot,
 O'er yonder glen,
Crown'd with thy quaint old rural cot,
 Beams on my ken :
With falt'ring step, for which I grieve,
Thy rustic seat I see thee leave,
Eager the stranger to receive
 In cheerful strain.

Again my hand by thine is press'd
 In that glad hour,
While I obey thy warm request
 To "stap in owre;"

Again I fill thy antique chair,
And smile to see thy housewife's care,
Press me to take of thy good fare,
 An ample store.

Again, all worldly cares aloof,
 In prayer we bow,
Beneath thy widow'd sister's roof,
 Where nightly thou
Didst wrestle with thy Father God,
That none within thy friend's abode
Might wander from the narrow road,
 To endless woe.

What tho' scholastic honours fair
 Might thee disown,
Thou art deem'd worthy now to wear
 A fadeless crown ;
What tho' thy harp's few simple lays
Ne'er gain'd for thee the poet's bays,
They sang thy dear Redeemer's praise
 In ev'ry tone.

Few treasures such as earth command
 Hadst thou bestow'd,
Yet poortith's cup had in thy hands
 With bliss o'erflow'd ;
With faith above all human creeds,
In Him who e'en the sparrow feeds,
Thou knew'st He'd serve thy little needs
 On life's bare road.

Life's march to thee had surely prov'd
 A journey drear,
Had not the Friend of Friends below'd
 Been ever near ;
His love, an ever fresh'ning tide,
For thee the desert beautified
With fadeless blooms on either side,
 Thy soul to cheer.

And as thou near and nearer drew
 The journey's bourne,
The prospect fair and fairer grew,
 Till nightless morn
Burst on thy joy-bedazzl'd sight,
When, clad in robes of spotless white,
Thy soul then took its heav'nward flight,
 Ne'er to return.

So, fare-thee-well, with this solace,
 Since hope I dare,
That I, ev'n worthless I, thro' grace,
 Shall join thee there.
With trials here such as were thine,
O may thy patience, too, be mine,
So that these fires my dross refine,
 The more I bear.

Calm may thy sacred dust repose
 'Mong kindred dead,
And soon may snowy wilding rose
 Bloom o'er thy head ;

Let Spring, with sweet "forget-me-not,"
Early befringe thy lowly cot,
And Summer flow'ry make the spot
Where thou art laid.

CONJUGAL MEMORIES.

I.

TRIED sharer of the joys and tears,
The sunshine and the shade;
The blessings, trials, hopes, and fears
That round our path have played,
Since heart with heart, and hand in hand,
We roved among the flowers,
That most luxuriantly expand
'Neath love's conjugal bowers.

Time's shuttles, love, how swift they fly
Athwart the web of life;
Brief term, it seems, since thou and I
Were new-made man and wife.
Yet more than one stray snowy thread,
Thy raven locks unfold;
Really, my dear, I'm half afraid,
That we are getting old.

Yes, *we*, I say, not *thou*, my love;
When plighted we our troth,
The compact was, each change should prove
Or good, or ill for both.

And tho' thou'st pluck'd from Time's hoar wings
'Fore me, the silv'ry feather,
Still, as the choice love-ditty sings,
 " We'll both grow old together."

Compared with many whom we see,
 Our wed life has been short,
Yet oft upon its troubled sea,
 Of storms we've been the sport.
And yet full many a prosp'rous breeze
 Our flapping sails has filled ;
Full many a joy, on summer seas,
 Our inner souls has thrilled.

Glad youth's bright laughter-peals have rung
 Within our happy home ;
Pale anguish hath our bosoms stung,
 As wept we o'er the tomb.
Four times for us hath Hope's bright beams,
 Lit up the infant brow ;
For them we've had our troubled dreams ;
 We're all but childless now.

Wee Johnny, boastful of the time
 When he a man would be,
And life's most rugged steeps he'd climb
 For us so gallantly.
Alas ! that little heart so bold,
 Tenant's Death's dark abode ;
Alas ! those nimble feet are cold
 And stiff beneath the sod.

And Janet of the flaxen hair,
And sweet love-stealing glance,
That sunned the moody brow of care,
And made our hearts to dance.
Ah me ! those curls of silken glow,
Rot in the grave's dank dew ;
That winning glance hath long ago
Evanished from our view.

And chubby Willie, angel boy,
Child of the azure eyes,
How did'st thou swell our hearts with joy,
Loved wanderer from the skies ;
Six gladsome months had crossed our ken,
Since thou to bless had'st come ;
Six swift-winged rapture months, and then
Thy Father called thee home.

Still, He is kind who takes and gives
Stores of parental wealth ;
Maggy, our eldest born, still lives,
Blushful of rosy health.
Ay, lives a comely maiden now,
From sterner cares yet free ;
With lightsome heart, and sunny brow,
To mourn, perchance, as we.

Yet, dry those gushing tears, dear friend,
And hither reach thy hand ;
Thus down life's vale our steps we'll wend,
To Jordan's rugged strand.

And should'st thou leave me, or I thee,
This side the dark wave's shore,
Fret not, we'll yet together be,
Where parting is no more.

II.

Ax, dry those tears, I keenly feel,
Dear wife, to see thee grieved,
And 'mid life's battle fain would heal
The wounds thou hast received.
The muse 'mid brighter scenes will soar,
Thou shalt propose the strain.
Our courting days?—Good ; let's live o'er
Those glorious days again.

Then straight thy shoulders, prick thine ears,
Hold up thy little head,
And shake, at least, a score of years
From out their fleshly bed.
Then bid them, with as many cares,
Go tread a lively measure,
While we, of bygone love affairs,
Drain one deep draught of pleasure.

A curious thing, dear wife, is love ;
Ere yet the pliant tongue
In its behalf hath dared to move,
What bosoms have been stung

By Cupid's darts ; 'twas so with us
And that right well we know ;
Nay, come now, make not such a fuss,
Nor set thy cheeks a-glow.

Thou yet remember'st well the spot,
Where we were wont to meet,
The time, the corner, and what not,
Of the familiar street.
And if from inadvertent slips,
I failed perchance to come,
O thou didst pout thy pretty lips,
And look severely glum.

No flow'ry field, no sylvan groves
Had we to rove among,
And yet we whispered o'er our loves
Securely 'mid the throng.
Full oft a nameless theft have I,
Committed 'midst the crowd,
There with thy slaps good-natured, sly,
Mine ears oftentimes have glowed.

Dost mind the rose, minus the thorn,
My first love-gift to thee
Thy virgin bosom to adorn :
Ah, thou *didst* mourn to see
Its beauties all untimely fade,
And prophesied 'twas so
My ev'ry vow of fealty made
To thee was doomed to go.

The "book-mark" I remember well,
 'Twas sewed, dear love, by thee;
But to this hour I cannot tell
 Aught of its destiny:
But ah! thou little teasing fair,
 Forget I never can,
Thou ever after couldst not bear
 My romping cousin Ann.

But pettish mood or spiteful tongue
 To part us strove in vain,—
Our hearts still to each other clung,
 And nought could make them twain.
Thus spent we young life's ardent noon,
 Till wedlock's sparkling bays,
Upon yon mellow eve in June,
 Had crowned our courting days.

Our summers then, methinks, dear wife,
 Were brighter far than now;
Not then, as now, ill-boding strife
 Darkened young winter's brow.
Birds then enjoyed a sweeter song,
 The flowers a fairer bloom;
We sought not then our friends among
 The dwellers of the tomb.

But tush! our summers gladden still,
 And tho' rough winter's voice
Hath harsher grown, a sweeter thrill
 It gives to fireside joys.

For us the songsters still have mirth,
The flowers still grace to lend,
And for us still this changeful earth
Hath more than one true friend.

III.

ANOTHER song, dear wife, I'll sing,
One more memorial strain,
And sure the muse, still on the wing,
Not always soars in vain.
And tho' few fancies grace my line,
Let Truth, that priceless gem,
In virgin beauty thro' it shine,
A peerless diadem.

Ah! 'twas a starry promise night,
Dear wife, that saw us wed;
Within our souls a holy light,
No storm-clouds overhead,
As join'd we in the sacred yoke,
And vowed our God before,
That nought save death's resistless stroke
Should ever part us more.

We quaffed, 'twas in no stinted sips,
Our draught of simple joys,
But raised the goblet to our lips,
And with exultant voice

Drank deep, and hailed with fresh delight
New joys with each new day,
Nor ever dreamt that joys so bright
Were fated to decay.

Rich in each other's deathless love,
We deemed our bliss secure;
Or ills that we could not remove,
We strong were to endure.
And tho' our hearts are not so brave
As when we both were young,
By God's good grace tough cords they have
E'en yet, not quite unstrung.

Nought knew we of those ills, good wife,
'Twere yet our souls to goad,
Nought of the thorny ways of life
O'er which we since have trod;
Or saw or heard we of distress,
We strove to sympathise,
Yet deemed "where ignorance was bliss,
'Twas folly to be wise."

But brightest skies are oft o'ercast
With clouds of darkest dye:
We left dreamland, and found at last
The stern reality—
That as each swift-winged hour resought
The source from whence it came,
Life, if with success 'twould be fraught,
Must be an earnest game.

'Twas now I found in thee a friend
And help-meet true indeed,
Whose life's one aim was to extend
Aid to my every need.
My sorrows and my joys were thine,
And cares, nor slight nor few;
And from that hour God made thee mine
I ever found thee true.

When Death's unsparing scythe cut down
Our fairest homestead flowers,
Or poverty's soul-freezing frown
Scowl'd black on us and ours—
The helpless, stricken woman I,
The manly champion thou,
Didst meet all with a dauntless eye,
And full defiant brow.

'Twas then, fond heart, a wily foe
Crept into our abode,
Came as a friend, who burned to show
How in his bosom glowed
Warm sympathy for my distress;
And to assuage my grief
A cordial brought, a friendly glass—
I drank, and felt relief.

Dear simple heart, thou never thought
A friend would lead astray;
Thou saw'st he comfort to me brought,
And pleased wert he should stay.

Yet by and by thou jealous grew
Of his assiduous care,
As if he strove ('twas sadly true)
Thy husband's love to share.

What tho' he sometimes did me wrong,
I soon forgave the friend
Who lov'd my joke, and cheer'd my song,
And praised me without end.
What tho' he led me oft o' nights
From my own hearth to roam,
His gilded haunts, and gay delights,
Made quite a pleasant home.

'Twas now thy love took wild alarm,
As to my side it flew,
To shield me from the biting harm,
That close and closer drew.
'Twas then thy streaming love-lit eyes
Sought heaven's gate for aid;
'Twas then thy heart-wrung moans and cries
Wildly for succour prayed.

Too late, 'twas now too late, dear wife—
He had me in his grasp,
And ere I conquered in the strife,
Fierce as the sting of asp
His poison dire rush'd thro' my veins,
And set my soul a-flame.
But, bless'd be God, I burst his chains,
And freeman I became.

No more!—let such dark mem'ries sleep
 In night that knows no dawn;
 Round them for aye let's closely keep
 Oblivion's curtain drawn.
 Let's kneel, dear wife, and thank our God,
 Who hath our prayers heard,
 And crave that still His staff and rod
 May be my stay and guard.

SONG—MY AIN HAME AT E'EN.

AIR—"A Friend in the Purse."

*Composed while the Author was on a visit to his Friends
 in the Country, May, 1860.*

Tho' comforts I hae plenty here, and freens on ilka han',
 An' rowth o' rural pleasures sweet I hae at my comman',
 Richt dowie I wan'er on by mead an' forest green,
 An' weary for my Maggie, an' my ain hame at e'en.

My ain hame at e'en, my ain hame at e'en,
 My hearts a' wi' my Maggie, at my ain hame at e'en.

The mavis an' the lintie sing fu' sweet frae ilka tree,
 The lav'rock peals his thrillin' notes up i' the lift sae
 heigh,

But my wee "Cantie Peat," * at hame 'll won'er whaur
 I've been,

An' wag his tail to see me at my ain hame at e'en.

My ain hame at e'en, my ain hame at e'en,
 I hae but Peat an' Maggie at my ain hame at e'en.

* A Goldfinch so called.

I ken noo, since 'tis Whitsunday, nae toil my lassie spares
At paintin' wa's, at washing claes, an' scrubbin' stools
and chairs ;

Syne she'll begin to snod hersel'—my ain wee sonsie
queen,

I'll hardly ken my Maggie, an' my ain hame at e'en.

My ain hame at e'en, my ain hame at e'en,

Heav'n spare her lang to wag about my ain hame
at e'en.

Tho' I hae unca little gear, somehow I maun to fen',
An' thanks to perseverance noo, ticht times begin to
men',

An aiblins yet the day will come that sees me brow an'
bien,

Wi' something for the needy at my ain hame at e'en.

My ain hame at e'en, my ain hame at e'en,

Could poortith disna fear me at my ain hame at e'en.

Foul fa' that loon, the whiskey stoup, he wrocht me
mony woes,

The very sark tore aff my back, stole baith my cog an'
brose ;

But noo, my fit upon his neck, folks sae I needna
mane,

Wi' fare and cleedin' healthy at my ain hame at e'en.

My ain hame at e'en, my ain hame at e'en,

I hae a fouth o' pleasures at my ain hame at e'en.

But noo, my freens, I maun be aff, yet ere I fairly gang,
Ye're welcome, for yer favours, to this bit hamely sang ;

And when ye come to yon big toun, my Meg an' I, I
 ween,
 Will be richt proud to see ye at oor ain hame at e'en.
 Our ain hame at e'en, our ain hame at e'en,
 We'se strive to mak you happy at our ain hame
 at e'en.

THE MUSE IN THE NURSERY.

I.

THE TWIN TODDLERS.

(Inscribed with respect to their Parents, A. and C. S.)

I'Lo'e dear Nature's ilka form,
 Her ilka mood, or calm, or storm,
 When zephyrs wi' ilk ither toy,
 Or storms growl forth their savage joy ;
 Her straths an' plains, her tangled woods,
 Whaur amorous cushet darklin' broods ;
 Her ocean tides, her streams, an' rills,
 Her glens, an' hoar snaw-tappit hills ;
 Her ilka season o' the year—
 Bauld winter, wi' his blasts severe,
 Or when wi' snaw he drapes the earth,
 To grace the younkin' towmond's birth ;
 Spring, wi' her life-revivin' wan',
 An' train, seed-laden lap an' han' ;
 Glad simmer, wi' her sunny showers,
 Her floral wealth, an' vocal bowers ;

Grave autumn, wi' her harvest cheer,
 As fa's the gloamin' o' the year ;—
 A' this I lo'e, yet 'bune compare,
 I lo'e yon wee twin toddlin' pair.

+

The rural shade an' balmy air
 May smooth the wrinkled broo o' care.
 In sick-room Flora may impart
 Cheer to the languid eye and heart ;
 The man o' melancholic mood
 May sigh for wintry solitude ;
 The love-forsaken heart may yearn
 For some auld cavern dark and stern ;
 Despair e'en in its mildest form,
 May hail the billow-heavin' storm ;
 But for a charm that rarely kills—
 A panacea for a' ills
 That storm the troubled gates o' life—
 Commend me to a kind guidwife,
 A cheery ingle, clean hearth-stane,
 A muckle sonsie, healthy wean,
 Or, whaur there's room aboot the hearth,
 Twa or' nar wee things at a birth—
 Juist sic a pair as I hae noo
 Toddlin' 'fore my delighted view.

What tho' the toddlers arena mine,
 They claim the dear maternal line
 O' her whase love wi' ardent flame
 Has warm'd my heart and lowly hame

For nigh a score o' changefu' years,
An' shared my sorrows, howps, an' fears.
But wherefore thus partic'larize?
The noo impatient reader cries—
This hum-drum preface is ow're lang,
Let's hae yer story, or gae hang.
Story! like yon knife-grinder chiel
O' Canning's, that's been quoted weel,
Gude bless ye! I hae nane to tell,
An' only meant to save oursel';
Lest ye micht think my spouse an' I
Thae toddlers view wi' partial eye,
When I fa' tae in Doric verse
Their ilk perfection to rehearse,
Boot whilk, an' ye hae ony swither,
I'se just refer ye to their mither;
An' surely she wha brocht them forth,
Maun be the best judge o' their worth.

Auld Mither Nature disna spare
Her favours on the bonny pair;
She's gien them een o'mildest blue,
Saft locklets o' an auburn hue.
Nor has her pencil failed to trace
A parent's features on ilk face:
The minnie's here, the daddie's there,
W' tenty, kind, impartial care.
There isna twa sic clever weans
Within Sanct Mungo's wide domains,
An' mony a muckle thocht o' pair
Roun' life's first circle toddle there.

Flora, the auldest o' the twa
 (An hour or sae), could lauch an' craw
 In her first quarter—kent her daddie,
 While her wee hauns were ever ready
 His bushy whiskers black to seize,
 Or 'tween her gums his neb to squeeze ;
 For e'en at sic an early date
 Her mou' was in an unca state ;
 An' suner than I've ere heard tell
 The ivory teeth 'gan show themsel
 In anes or twas—tho' bide a wee!—
 Her sister Maggie bore the gree,
 An' had a cluster o' white pearls
 (The nursin' mithers looked-for arls),
 Ere glegest mither could discern
 Their out-come in an or'nar bairn.

A towmont gane, or little mair,
 The wee things baith had ta'en the flair,
 Till noo, like gamesome lambies fleet,
 An' nae less sicker on their feet,
 Frae b^ut to b^en they quickly rin,
 Nor meet mishap to broo or chin.
 There's no a neuk in a' the house
 But maun be seen by ilk wee mouse,
 Sae curious seem they oot to fin'
 What sort o' warld they are in.
 And, hech, they tak' an unca pride
 In toozlin black cat Sambo's hide,
 Till, what 'tween their auld farrant ways
 An' Sam, the cat's, on rainy days,

They keep the place in sic a biz,
 Wad Care but show his ugsome phiz,
 He'd see the bodies were ow're thrang
 To gie him heed, sae aff he'd gang;
 An' won'er 'tis, when aff he wheels,
 How many ills stick to his heels.
 Or when the day is warm an' dry,
 To further that dear "outtie-by"— *pusher*
 The thrifty mither's mine o' wealth,
 When bairns are fashious, yet in health—
 Their da' has coft them a wee coach,
 The whilk whene'er they see approach,
 Their buffie hauns they clap wi' glee;
 Syne aff they're whur'l't fu' cannily
 'Lang Sauchieha' to Kelvingrove,
 'Mang flowers an' kindred sweets to rove;
 Or, thanks to civic freedom gien,
 Chase ither ow're the gow'ny green;
 Syne hame return o' pleasure weary,
 An' sleep for hours as soun's a pearie.

I'm thinkin', noo, I hae ta'en note
 O' what perfections they hae got,
 An' reckon we their months, no years,
 We'll own they hae na mony peers.
 Yet, there's a dame turns up her nose,
 As doun she bangs my rhymin' prose,
 An', sumph! quò she, an' that be a'
 Ye've got to brag o' 'boot yer twa,
 Here's my twin callans that I hae
 Will match your toddlers ony day.

E'en sae, guidwife, but spare yer zeal;
For callans, they'll dae unca weel,
But ne'er can show the matchless grace
That suns the plainest lassock's face.

Come, sin' my toddlers are at rest,
Let's keek into their cozie nest
(The Muse and I some nicht may staun
By your twa pets, wi' lyre in haun),
An' tell me gin ye ever saw,
In a' respects, a sweeter twa,
As there in peacefu' sleep they lie,
Admired by seraphim on high.

Ah, sleep thou dear, but coyish maid,
To win thy charms what schemes are laid;
Manhood for thee aft vainly yearns,
When cheek to cheek wi' tender bairns
Thou lov'st to nestle; an' 'tis best,
There thou secur'st a kindred breast.
Still lang and sweet thy favours fa'
In showers upon thae lovely twa;
Distant the hour when care or pain
Debar thee frae the happy twain.

Lang may kind Heaven thae flow'rets spare
To you, ye fond parental pair,
To shed a fragrance roun' yer hearth,
Till e'en this troublous, rank'rous earth
(Troublous, alake! in strife an' din;
Rank'rous, alake! in fruits o' sin)

Rich foretastes to yer souls supplies
 O' a repurchas'd Paradise;
 And while ye tenant this chill sphere,
 Yer warly guddle still to cheer,
 May mony anither bonnie flower
 Spring up 'neath your domestic bower.

II.

WEE MAGGIE M'CASH.

A LIFE PICTURE.

THOU'R'T a bonnie bit creature,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 An' sweet thy ilk feature,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 Smiles thy snawy white broo,
 'Bune twa een skyie blue,
 An' a ripe cherry mou,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Thou'rt the flower o' a' posies,*
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Thy cheeks red as roses,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 But wae worth fashion's folks
 To confine thy fair locks
 In thae trashy net pocks,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

* *Posie* or *bab*—a nosegay.

Wi' the form o' a fairy,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Sae licht, neat, and airy,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Thy bit mind's gifties a',
 Fresh as buds i' yon shaw,
 Are beginnin' to blaw,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Thou art nae stechie sonsie,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Nae dull, dreamy doncie,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 But frae mornin' till nicht,
 Like a glad beam o' licht,
 Thou art aye on the flicht,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

At the first peep o' mornin',
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 A' counsel aye scornin',
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Wi' thy frien' chanticleer,
 Oot o' doors thou maun steer,
 Whaur thou'rt wild as a deer,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Thy bit tongue's gabbie prattle,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Is ne'er owre the rattle,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,

Till what wi' thy wise says,
An' droll auld farrant ways,
We're struck dumb wi' amaze,
Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Thou'rt a noticin' lassie,
Wee Maggie M'Cash,
An' naething can pass thee,
Wee Maggie M'Cash;
Folks maun watch what they say
Lang as thou'rt in the way,
Or they'll hear o't niest day,
Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Ever ringin' an' rantin',
Wee Maggie M'Cash,
A something still wantin',
Wee Maggie M'Cash;
No a neuk i' the house
But what thou, bardie mouse,
Maun examine fu' crouse,
Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Thou'rt a neibourly body,
Wee Maggie M'Cash,
An' ca'st at my study,
Wee Maggie M'Cash;
Ay, e'en when I've gat lair'd,
Aften dauntless thou'st dared
Whusk by this muckle beard,
Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Weel, rant as it please thee,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 Sin' pleasure it gies thee,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 Thou'lt no wauken oor wean,
 Though we've had mair than ane,
 But, alas! they're a' gaen,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Though I've tint a' sic treasure,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 To see thee's a pleasure,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 Thou gar'st memory twine
 'Bout the days o' langsyne,
 Till I think thou art mine,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

Frisk awa, cantie lambie,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash,
 The joy o' thy mammy,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash;
 Bonnie sweet three-year-auld,
 "Lowrie Tod" wud be bauld
 To rive thee frae the fauld,
 Wee Maggie M'Cash.

III.

SONG OF THE HAPPY PARENTS.

Come patter, patter, tiny feet;
Thus to behold you nimbly trot,
Wakes up a music wondrous sweet
Within our ravish'd ears to float.

Come handle, handle, busy hands;
Fear not, your parents will not scold;
Their love o'er you more watchful stands
Than ere did miser o'er his gold.

Come prattle, prattle, children all,
More joy to us your voices bring
Than e'er did cuckoo's amorous call
To the expectant ear of Spring.

Come carol, carol, dulcet throats,
As round your native bowers ye rove;
We'd not exchange your silv'ry notes
For sweetest music of the grove.

Come tinkle, tinkle, merry laughs,
Our hearts with pleasure ye make swell,
As when, in dreams, the exile quaffs
Draughts from his native village well.

Come twinkle, twinkle, lust'rous eyes,
Deep founts to us of pure delights;
Clearer than summer noonday skies,
Or Cynthia's bright autumnal nights.

Come nestle, nestle, rosy cheeks,
Your parents' breasts have room for all;
'Tis thus the balmy flow'ret seeks
Repose at evening's dewy fall.

Come kneel ye, kneel ye, pretty ones,
Our Heavenly Father's throne around;
He loves to hear your lisping tones—
Pray'r is to him a grateful sound.

IV.

PRAY FOR THE POOR OUTCAST.

Ye children who have downy beds,
And pillows snowy white,
Whereon to lay your weary heads
In rest each long, long night,
Say, if when loving hands attend
To tuck ye up so fast,
Ye ask dear Jesus to befriend
The houseless, poor outcast?

How many half-pence do ye save
For missionary cause?
By you what hungry orphans have
Been plucked from famine's jaws?
To make the widow's heart rejoice,
Have ye a trifle past?
Or do ye love some paltry toys
More than the poor outcast?

For you kind fathers gladly toil,
From early morn till ev'n;
While prattler's lisp and baby's smile
Their rich rewards are given.
The trimness of your clothes bespeak
The thrifty mother's care;
No uncouth patch nor broken steek
Upbraid the artist there.

But ah! how different is the lot
Of yon boy on the street;
No jacket his poor back has got,
No shoes his blistered feet.
He roams about the town all day,
And oft, I fear, may steal;
With nought his downward course to stay,
Save stern Law's rugged zeal.

Remember, though you're happy now,
Adversity may come,
And wrinkle up the smoothest brow,
And wreck the fairest home.
So think what throbbing, naked breasts
Must face the brawling blast,
And ere ye seek your cosy nests,
Pray for the poor outcast.

Remember, too, our blessed Lord
Died that our rebel race,
If but obedient to his word,
Might all obtain his grace.

O what a joy the thought inspires—
 No poor ones were o'erpass'd!
 Nay, angels tune afresh their lyres,
 To welcome the outcast.

V.

WEE JEANIE.

BORN MAY, 1860; DIED SEPTEMBER, 1863.

WHAT though, red cheekit, toddlin' wean,
 Thou wertna mine, †
 I grieve that death sae sune hath ta'en
 That haun o' thine,
 An' led thee that rough path along,
 The whilk has cost me mony a pang,
 Though 'tis a gaet we a' maun gang,
 Or sune, or syne.

'Twas vain that thou did'st bravely strive
 No to gae wi' him,
 Thee frae thy cosie nest to rive
 There's nocht could stay him;
 The mither bird's heart-rending wail
 In vain rang through this tearfu' vale,
 Nor man, nor angel, might prevail
 To wrest thee frae him.

Methinks that death I noo descry him,
 The tyrant stern,
 An' thou, Wee Jeanie, toddlin' by him,
 A prattlin' bairn,

Whase sunny face still earthward turns
Wi' fond "Ta, tas," for her wha mourns,
An' wha, while she in life sojourns,
For thee will yearn.

That friend o' lambskins, birds, and flowers,
Heart-stirrin' May,
Brocht thee to this chill sphere o' ours,
Short time to stay.
An' dearer than e'er tender lamb
Was to the bosom o' its dam,
Thou still gat dearer to thy mam
Ilk passin' day.

But ae sad lack thy minnie had—
Sair did she miss
The manly presence o' thy dad
To crown her bliss;
In search o' Fortune, fickle dame,
He'd left his kintra, bairns, an' hame,
Ere Jeanie yet had come to claim
The natal kiss.

Cam' rosy-fitted simmers four,
An' saw thee grow;
And winters three beheld thee flower
Fair 'mid the snow.
But ere October's norlan blast
Had four autumnal skies o'er cast,
That heartless reaper, Death, cam' past
An' laid thee low.

O then hoo sad thy minnie's plicht,
 Nae daddie near
 To press her gowpin broo, or dicht
 The scaudin tear ;
 But on that sad September day
 Cam' kinsfolk roun her to convey
 Doun to the cauld, cauld house o' clay,
 Her Jeanie dear.

Nae da e'er straik't thy locklets saft
 ⁺O' auburn hue,
 Nor seal'd wi' glowin' kisses aft
 Thy cherry mou' ;
 The love-blinks o' thy coal-black een
 That mirror'd what thou micht hae been—
 Alake, nae daddie e'er had seen,
 Nor can dae noo.

O'er cherish'd memories o' thee
 Thy minnie keeps
 A jealous guard ⁺wi' miser e'e
 That rarely sleeps ;
 Frae thy blythe turns and kindly ways,
 Sage looks an' droll auld-farrant says—
 Aye green as fields in simmer days—
 Great joy she reaps.

What though the mists o' death enshroud
 Thee frae her e'e,
 A mither's ken will pierce the cloud,
 Dense though it be ;

An' though to this dull mundane sphere
Thy voice is hush'd, in her gleg ear
Its silv'ry tones still warble clear
Sweet melody.

When mail bags frae yon distant lan'
Bring nocht frae da,
Thou com'st wi' some prent scrap in han'
An' say'st, " here, ma,
A cheerie letter frae my daddie,
He's coming to mak' ou a leddie;
Noo dinna greet, we'll a' mak' ready
To gang awa'."

Thus while thou'rt far removed by death
Frae this chill clime,
Thy minnie sees thee, free o' scaith,
In fadeless prime.
Thou to her e'e can ne'er grow auld,
But fairer beauties still unfauld
Than could hae flourished in our cauld
Blae-fields o' time.

Then, spirit-bairn, revisit aft
Thy minnie here,
Till heaven-borne breezes hameward waft
Thy da wi' cheer;
An' that blessed land O may they gain,
To sing o' whilk thou here wert fain,
Whaur to their ravish'd hearts they'll strain
Their Jeanie dear.

VI.

TO A STILL-BORN CHILD.

O PROMIS'D joy, untasted fruit,
Much long'd for here with warm request,
Regret would fainly press her suit
With Him at whose all-wise behest
Thou cam'st, thy beauties to unfold
'Fore us for e'en the briefest term—
A cherub babe of faultless mould,
Nought lacking save the vital germ.

Hope saw thee with her sunny eyes
Nestling amid a lovely blossom ;
Desire sprang forth to clutch the prize,
And strain thee to her yearning bosom.
But woe's me for the gloomy guest
That round domestic bliss aye lingers ;
Death came ere she the boon could wrest,
And snatch'd thee from her bleeding fingers.

'Tis well ; and while submit we must,
Howe'er we strive 'gainst bit and bridle,
Haply we bury in the dust,
In thee, sweet babe, another idol,
'Fore whom the knee we might have bow'd,
In fond idolatrous devotion ;
So let us meekly kiss the rod,
And quell each murmurous emotion.

SEASONAL INFLUENCES:
A SERIES OF FRAGMENTARY SKETCHES.

S P R I N G .

ONCE more the softening influence of Spring,
Like beauteous maid, 'fore whose subduing charms
Soon prostrate falls the rugged heart of man,
Hath Winter wiled from his cerulean throne :
And, with alternate sunshine on his brows,
And rain-drops trickling from his hoary locks,
Now gently waving in the April breeze,
The while a parting growl of discontent
Falls now and then upon the listening ear ;
The storm-king for a time resigns our clime
To the all life-pervading sway of Spring.

Not beings animate alone appear
To poet's eye delighted with the change,
But dullest matter, in itself inert,
Leaps joyous to the life-imparting touch ;
And the cold clod strips off its ragged coat
Of tawny brown, and dons, with seeming glee,
A smooth, rich garment of the vernal hue,
Bedappl'd o'er with many favours sweet—
Love gifts from radiant Flora's bounteous hand.
Each bosky tenant of the forest wild
And cultured grove, from yonder gnarled oak,
Whose front hath braved the storms of ten decades,
Down to the sapling of last summer's growth,

Shoots forth new strength, the which will soon be
crowned

With glistening canopies of virgin leaves.
Nay, even the victims of the woodman's axe,
Touched by the vital tide pervading all,
Put forth their tender shoots, as if to show
What they'd have done if fate had kinder been.
Down to the core of yonder flinty rock
Rushes the vital current, and anon
From new-sprung fountain-heads pellucid rills
Gush forth, to cheer the heart of man and beast.
Old ocean's wonted ire hath been allayed
By this great mystery, and hoarse-voiced streams,
By this strange spell o'ertaken and subdued,
Meander now serenely to their goal ;
While e'en to all their finny peoples reach
A strange life-giving, life-sustaining joy.

The sun, like workman eager for his toil,
No lazy lie-a-bed, gets up by times,
To journey o'er the widening expanse
Of day ; and still his burning chariot wheels
Fresh inroads make into black night's domain.
The hum of insects—opening breath of flowers—
The low of cattle—murmuring of brooks
Now dancing gaily o'er their pebbly beds,
Join cadence with the woodland choir, and hail
With pure delight the influence of Spring.
Each male bird now his feathery coat replumes,
Until it scintillates 'neath Sol's bright rays ;
The while glad music swells his little throat,

To wile, mayhap, yon winsome ladybird,
To share with him parental toils and cares.
Even city sparrows on the house-tops, now
More joyously do twitter than of late,
And pounce expert upon the vagrant straw
Dropt opportune from cart or rustic wain,
Wherewith to rear up dwellings for their broods.
Now warbles forth my peerless goldfinch, "Peat,"
From out his little cot, a sweeter strain ;
To him the loud expression of his joy,
To me the joy inspiring source of song.
Sing on, sweet minstrel ; tho' thy speckled wing
The air of liberty hath never cleft,
Thou pip'st as blithely in thy prison-house
As do thy kindred in their wild-wood haunts ;
With this advantage—thou art safe with me
From many sorrows common to thy friends.

More briskly now revolve the wheels of trade ;
While plodding cit and toiling artizan
More nimbly thread their living zig-zag ways ;
That to his warehouse, to his workshop this ;
Each longing for the quick return of eve,
When out of harness, he, with book in hand,
Or genial soul, mayhap in kindred mould,
An hour may spend 'mong pure suburban joys.
But are all so inclined ? Would heaven they were !
(Plead for me virtue when I thus digress)
Then yonder glaring drunkery had not
(Have them it shall while legalised to sell)
So many fools around its gilded bar ;

Nor yonder prison so many crowded cells;
Nor yonder church so many empty pews;
Nor yonder wife so many scalding tears;
Nor yonder babe so many famine cries;
Nor yonder soul so many fears of hell.

'Tis now that Alma Mater's session ends,
To the delight of teacher and of taught;
And many anxious bosoms far away,
Are throbbing now with gladsome cheer, to hail
The home-come of the family hope and pride.
The knitting needles and the book thrown past—
The garden now hath healthful work in store
For romping girl and merry-hearted boy;
Who, mimic spade, or rake, or hoe in hand,
Upon their little plots much labour spend,
To woo their floral treasures thro' the soil.
'Tis now that city urchins leave their homes,
Within the dingy lane, or crowded street,
When comes their weekly holiday at school;
And dell and dingle with their mirth resound,
As burst the joy-whoops from their merry hearts;
While gloaming grey sees them returning, loth,
Footsore, yet laden with the spoils of Spring;
Nor till another holiday comes round,
Want their abodes the honied breath of flowers.
Stalks now the husbandman with step elate
Along the rig-foot of his brairding wheat;
While all is toil and bustle on the farm,
Committing to the trustful keep of earth
The bulby esculent and tender grain,

All duly yet to re-appear, and swell
The song triumphal of "the harvest-home."

Such are thy handiworks, O genial Spring,
As seen thro' my poor mist-beclouded ken ;
And while thy generous influence instils
A throbbing joy into my every nerve,
I humbly raise a very humble song
Of adoration to the great "I Am ;"
Creator, God, and Father of the whole,
Who made, and keeps all things so wondrous well.

SUMMER.

I.—THE COUNTRY.

As gently glides the girl into the maid,
Unseen, perchance, save by parental eyes,
And she who lately charmed fond hearts at home,
As each joy-laden holiday came round,
With golden trophies of her zeal at school,
But who, now crowned with lovely woman's
 charms,
Draws to her with the mystic cords of love
A bevy of the rougher sex to woo ;
E'en so hath Spring, her wayward humour o'er,
By ardent Phœbus woo'd for three full moons,
Yielded responsive to his amorous suit,
And now, in all the woman's ripened charms,

He leads her forth to stroll, his blooming bride,
Now Summer called, whose presence blesses all
Within the boundaries of his vast domains,
And of whose mighty influence sublime,
Aid me, ye tuneful sisterhood, to sing.

Hail, joy-ethereal, balmy Summer, hail,
A welcome visitant where'er thou go'st,
And O how welcome to our changeful clime,
Where Winter rules so harshly and so long.
Blithesome as bride upon her marriage tour,
Full blushing in the hey-day of her bloom,
Thou trippest forth, and o'er thy rosy path
Thou strew'st thy choicest boons with gen'rous
hand,

Till, 'fore the fervour of thy conquering charms,
Old Earth forgets rough Winter's rude assaults,
But ill atoned for by the care of Spring,
Forgets her years and drinks young life again,
Feeling through all her bounds, soft touched by
thee,

A tingling thrill of glowing ardour fire
Her every nerve, and with one joyous shout
That speaks of glee hilarious at the heart,
To grace thy presence dons her gayest robes,
And one bright festive holiday enjoys.
What spell, O Summer, wields thine azure eye
To gladden Earth and all her various tribes
Of beings animate ; nor these alone
Attest thy power, but dullest matter feels
Thy living presence wheresoe'er thou art,

And hoary rocks whose towering fronts had erst
Frowned back defiance to the yelling hosts
Of winter storms, 'fore thy sun-lit career
Unknit their brows, and wag their grizzly beards
For very joy ; and while the fathers grey
Of glen and woodland wave their sinewy arms,
And from the pulseless clod spring laughing troops
Of floral beauties to adorn thy train,
The breeze joins cadence with the lapsing rill,
And hymns thy advent in a joyous song.

Then rouse thee, Man : peculiar care art thou,
And richest sharer of kind Summer's boons ;
Rouse thee, and 'mid the quiet rural scene,
Where Summer loves her graces to unfold,
There let thy grateful orisons arise,
And swell glad nature's madrigal of praise
To " nature's God," from whom, O man, proceeds
Thy being, and each blessing thou enjoyest.
And see, from out her amaranthine bowers
In the now purpling east, Aurora speeds
To open wide the golden gates of heaven,
That day's bright monarch and his smiling bride,
Joy-bearing Summer, may come forth again,
And gladden all 'neath their benignant sway.
Gently at first, to train our feeble ken,
For the effulgence that anon prevails,
Which sudden flung would blind us with its blaze,
Are op'd the shining portals of the morn.
Beam now the eastern hill-tops with a streak
Of rosy light, which, while Aurora shakes

O'erhead her golden locks out to the breeze,
On wing'd feet flies earthwards down the slopes,
And from his lowly bed wakes up the lark,
Who soaring sings, and singing soars to greet
The infant day with heartfelt gush of song.
Meantime the sun hath dawn's grey threshold
passed,
And proudly mounts his royal vaulted way,
While through a parting drapery of haze,
Fragrant with the ambrosial breath of flowers,
He pours abroad his life-refreshing beams,
Till earth swims joyous in a sea of light.

Roused by the lusty call of Chanticleer,
The faithful watchman at a neighbouring farm,
Forth hies the shepherd from his rustic shed,
Lone nestling by the foot of yonder hill,
Along whose verdant slopes his tender charge
Crop their repast ; forth hies he with his dog,
Who barks his salutation to the morn,
Then rolls exultant o'er the dewy sward,
Or, bounding from his master's side, pursues
The scudding hare, till from the chase recalled
By that shrill whistle not to be gainsayed,
He now with sober gait trots on before,
But well observes his master's eye the while,
Ready to course at bidding round the hill
And blithe return stray wanderers to the flock.
The shepherd now amongst his woolly charge,
And by the favourites of the flock descried,
They hail his presence with their plaintive bleats,

And nibble from his hands th' expected dole
For them reserved from last night's frugal meal.
Ye merit well, ye meek-eyed harmless race,
Your shepherd's tender care, and will repay
That care anon, when, with a gentle hand,
Athwart your backs the whetted shears he plies,
Till, soon relieved of all your woolly coats,
To you now cumbrous grown 'neath summer skies,
Ye scamper wildly to your hills again,
As if pursued by the relentless doom
That yet shall claim you for omnivorous man.
But no, ye timorous folks, this panic o'er,
(Nor will it long possess your gentle breasts)
Dreadless of future ills, ye crop the sward,
Nor ask for other than your present joys,
A blessing which your shepherd never knows.

Forth to the cheerful labours of the fields,
With glistening scythes across their shoulders
borne,

Jog yonder sturdy swains ; while rake in hand,
A rosy troop of merry-hearted maids
Trip singing after to their jocund toils.
Sweet scenting now the infant breath of morn,
Rise luscious odours from the new mown hay,
As wave on wave before the shearing scythe
It falls upon the breast of mother earth,
There to be gathered into fragrant heaps
And placed in order due upon the field ;
And when well winnowed by the sunny breeze,
Thence to be carted on the farmer's wain,

Or to his stackyard, or to neighbouring town,
And blithe haymakers gain their harvest home.
Or peradventure 'mid a wondering throng
Of awe-struck churls, who dread their calling gone,
And farmers who behold their fortunes rise,
(So wide apart the weal of human kind)
Proud Science bares her sinews to the task,
And, as if raised by some enchanter's spell,
In well-rang'd order o'er the stubbly field,
The burly haycocks rear their tufted crests,
As if they, braggart-like, were fain to crow
O'er the achievements of our beardless age,
Compared with the departed fathers grey.

The milky mothers o'er the clov'ry lea
Luxurious feed, or ruminating lie,
With swelling udders full to overflow;
Nor feel the bitter thralldom of the stake,
But day and night sweet liberty enjoy,
Save when they yield their rich lacteal stores
To blooming Jenny's kind persuasive hand,
Who, as she plies her nimble fingered art,
Outvies the merle in his sweetest song;
Her only plague, good lass, those buzzing flies,
That still keep fitting round her tempting pail,
Where many hapless wretches meet their doom,
And wriggling perish 'mid the snowy flood.
And flies there be of a much nobler sort,
Who find, alas, how oft, that promised joy,
When once possessed, is e'en their direst bane.

Yon matron mare attended by her colt,
Would seem solicitous of our approach,
And neighing, curves her neck across the fence,
As if she'd tell us of a mother's joy.
Let us advance the creature's joy to share,
A joy as pure as mother ere can feel
Who sees her living offspring by her side.
But no, the jilting jade retreats apace,
'Twas but a feint, and there she proudly stands,
Us scanning with her clear, life-beaming eye.
Let us approach, and but upraise a hand,
With mane and tail full flowing in the breeze,
Snorting, she flies careering o'er the lawn,
Hard followed by the filly at her heels,
Playful as lambkin on the gowany lea.

Slow coiling up the eastern slope of heaven,
The fiery sun upon the zenith gains,
And shoots direct his eye-distressing beams,
Prone to the earth oppress'd, and here and there
Into brown fissures cleft by tyrant heat ;
While (save that yonder distant patch of cloud,
Far to the south, looks ominously dark)
Wide circling all the ether vault of heaven,
Stretch'd from horizon to horizon's verge,
There sleeps an ocean clear of speckless blue
From which the troubled eye averted turns,
And panting life doth languish for the shade.
'Tis well that hoary custom hath ordained,
That 'mong our swarthy sons of rustic toil,
The blazing reign of noon shall be observed

As sacred to the jocund mid-day meal,
Which, variously disposed, they now enjoy,—
Or 'neath the shelter of the hay-cock's wing,
Or by the milk-white thorn or beechen hedge,
Or shady bank of thicket-roving brook.

Straight for the well-known pond the cattle rush,
And 'mid its fast decreasing treasures stand,
Sucking large draughts of the now tepid flood;
Lashing their hot sides with their bushy tails,
While at each stroke some luckless gadfly falls.
Gone are our little fanners of the air,
Heaven's choristers, the blithsome feathery tribes,
Gone to their cool retreats 'mid bosky shades,
Nor wing to winnow the brow-beating heat,
Nor voice to cheer the unreverbrant air :
While of the myriad insect tribes that roam
Wide o'er the fields of ether, few attempt
To brave the rigour of the sultry hour ;
But round the verdant leaf, or spiky blade
Of grass or fern they wait their glad release.
Languish the floral children of the fields,
Save those who haunt the quiet sylvan nook,
And one bold yellow beauty that upturns
Her amorous bosom to the orb of day,
And mourns, as poets tell, when he departs.

Ho, for the woodlands wild, the bosky shades,
Impervious to the pasture-scorching beams
Of yonder fiery ruler of the day,
Now in the flush of his meridian blaze,

While earth lies panting 'neath his sultry sway.
How pleasant now the verdant mossy seat
'Neath lordly ash, or elm, or drooping yew ;
Or, to the season dear, the gaudy birch,
Hard by the bank of some meandering stream,
That laughing loves to skirt the woodland's bounds.
And such retreat, dear Kelvin, thou'rt to me,
Lone wanderer from the hills near which I drew
My being's nascent breath ; and where since then
With book in hand, and from the world retired,
That being's choicest hours have sweetly sped.
There oft have I, my venerable friend,
Dear Hamilton, conned o'er thy thrilling page,*
And felt my bosom burn to emulate
Thy ardent zeal to better human kind,
The while my prattling muse would hush her song
To list enraptured to thy heart-born strains.
Here, Kelvin, oft on balmy summer morn,
Mine eyes have scanned thy calm pellucid wave,
(Pellucid, save where lordly man hath checked
Thy bright career to serve his private ends ;
And when thou'dst carrol'd thro' thy farthest grove,
A thing of life into old Clutha's arms,
He dams thee back a voiceless stagnant flood)
And joyous viewed the sportive fish at play.
Full oft I've watched the angler ply his craft
By yon green arch of wavelet kissing boughs,
Retreat of troutlet when the blazing noon

* Poems and Essays, by Janet Hamilton, Langloan.
Glasgow : Murray & Son. 1863.

Bathed his warm brow amid the gelid stream—
Have watched and pitied much the speckled trout,
By man whipt wriggling from its oozy bed.
Twitter the birds that erst full sweetly charmed
With mellow strains, the meditative ear ;
Or restless now they peck their glossy coats ;
Or they, whose breasts the dear occasion feel,
Devote the hour to fond parental cares.
Gath'ring at will his rich ambrosial food,
Listless, the bee roves on from flower to flower
That sigh, methinks, for the lip-kissing breeze,
And the reviving touch of dewy eve,
So parch'd they seem e'en 'mid their hermit bowers.

But wherefore, and from whence this sudden gloom,
Fast settling o'er the lofty vault of heaven ?
And what dread fear pursues yon marshall'd troop
Of cawing rooks careering to these woods ?
And wherefore seek our feathery warblers, all,
On trembling wings, the most-secluded shades,
While plaintive bleat of lambkin on the hills,
And deeper low of cattle on the fields,
In troubled murmurs claim his kindly aid,
Who musing stands 'mid this sore trying hour ?
The cause behold of this ill-boding change—
In yonder clouds, which erst seemed but a speck,
Dark'ning the southern region of the sky,
But grown immense, and reft in twain they stand,
Host fronting host in strife presaging mood,
And soon their loud artillery deafning roars ;
The while the sun, as if he dreaded harm,

From lurid flash and percussive shock,
Hath to his frowning citadel retired,
From whence he views his ireful vassals strive.
Distant at first, and indistinctly heard,
The horrid tramp of elemental war,
But nearer still, and 'mid a fierce uproar,
The murky hosts their belching lines advance,
And ether gleams as blaze succeeds to blaze,
Precursors dire of each returning charge;
Till earth, beleaguered, trembles 'neath the shock.
Cleft from the rocks, huge masses thundering crash
Down to the vales, with death in their career.
Prone to the dust, the forest monarch falls,
And, axe in hand, the woodman shares his fate,
While gamesome lambs lie blacken'd on the hills,
And fearful cattle bellow o'er the meads,
If, haply, they escape the threatened doom.
Frantic, the farmer sees his stacks a-blaze,
And with his rustics shares the general dread,
That now is rung old Time's departing knell.
But no, not yet hath earth the task performed
Assigned her by her Maker to discharge,
And in the conflict's direful height, the sun
Commands the winds to ope his reservoirs
Of hoarded rains, those fresheners of the earth,
But fellest foes to the contending hosts,
That now 'mid parting flash and growl depart
From off the field in wild disordered rout;
While through the bright'ning air, led by the
breeze,
One large, life-cheering shower to earth descends,

And forth anon, rejoicing in his might,
Bursts the all-powerful monarch of the day,
And earth is glad 'neath his refulgent beams.

'Tis utter pleasure all in earth and sky,
When beauteous Summer thus serenely smiles,
Like love-sick maiden, through her pearly tears,
Warm trickling from a heart o'errun with joy,
That now their love-estranging quarrel o'er,
She leans her head upon her heart's desire.
The sun shakes out his golden locks afar
As o'er his western fields he stately glides,
While peace supreme gilds his ethereal path,
As if it ne'er had felt the wreck of war.
From forest, hedgerow, grove, and thicket wild,
Resistless as the sweep of ocean tide,
Comes surging through the air a flood of song,
From thousand feathery throats, in varied tone,
Yet joined to swell one sweet harmonious strain,
Expressive of the joy they inly feel;
While gaily in the sun's life-stirring beams
The insect nations tread their mazy dance,
And hum their little songs. The brooklet now
With bickering din trots o'er its pebbly bed
In rural cadence with the bleat of lamb,
The low of cattle, and the neigh of steeds;
While all the bosky tenants of the wild
And cultured grove in rustling honours clad,
Feel the warm touch, and clap their hands for joy.
Sweet Flora now, with all her lovely train,
E'en from the gayest that in garden blooms,

Down to the meek-eyed daisy of the field,
Shower from their eyes of many-tinted hues,
Their grateful thanks for Summer's genial care,
The brier, the myrtle, rose, and yellow broom,
(And dear auld Scotland's heather, now in bell,)
In furzy thicket join their balmy breaths;
And load the summer air with fragrant smells,
The while entrancing fancy's ear and eye,
That with the future dearly love to dwell,
Brown Autumn whets his sickle and his scythe,
And pointing to yon fields of rustling grain,
Fast rip'ning for his jocund, dear employ,
Prepares him for another harvest home ;
While gladsome Nature lifts her swelling voice,
And of her great Creator joyous sings ;
Then be not mute, O man, uplift thy voice,
And with glad Nature swell thy Maker's praise ;
And as thou singest let thy soul ascend,
Till soaring she regain her native skies,
Nor woo her pleasure in a lower sphere,
So shalt thou summer in Jehovah's smile,
Increasing still thy sempiternal bloom.

II.—THE TOWN.

Come, lovely summer, from thy sylvan bowers,
Thy floral haunts, and music-ringing groves,
Th' o'er-labour'd heart of city life to cheer.
Come with thy smiling rosy-footed morns,

Thy glowing noons, long days, and dewy eves ;
Thy darting meteors, and thy silvery moons ;
Thy beauteous rainbows, and thy sunny showers ;
Thy humming breezes, and thy azure skies ;—
O come with these, and every other joy
Of which thou'rt queen, and lend this bustling scene
Of human toil the halo of thy charms.
Thou lovest best, mayhap, fair queen, to dwell
In sweet retirement 'mid the rural shades ;
But still thou lov'st to turn thy beaming ken
Townwards to cheer the toiling artisan,
Whose yearning heart and earnest eye sore pine
To hail the joy-spring of thy glorious dawn.
And soon as o'er the eastern hills thou smil'st,
Each moment he can snatch from greedy toil,
Is giv'n to thee, thou queen of pure delight.
Here feeble eild, and manhood in his prime,
With prattling childhood that can barely lisp
Its fond inquiry for warm summer days,
All, with a zest peculiar, long for thee.
How oft within life's citadel distress'd,
Affliction's children bravely have withstood
The storms of winter and the siege of death,
And strain'd their weary eyes for thy advent,
" Red'ning the hills," in hope thou'st that relief
Which puzzl'd science fails to yield them now.

Sole offspring of her old and widowed sire,
Poor Mary pressed a sick bed far from home,
'Mong strangers, in a traffic-roaring town,
And inly yearned for summer's bright return,

When she'd re-seek her quiet native glen,
There, doubtless, to regain her rustic bloom.
For though, with living faith in Jesus' blood,
She dreaded not the chill embrace of death,
Still life, seen through her hope-lit youthful eyes,
Seem'd passing fair, and much to be desired.
"Old age and poverty, that ill-match'd pair,"
Press'd on her sire, who, daring to prefer
His rural freedom to the poor-house walls,
Had been denied the wonted parish dole,
Which, had his daughter known, he ne'er had
crav'd.

She, years gone by, had seen her mother laid
'Mongst kindred dust within the lone churchyard,
And now, her aged father's sole support,
She, with a kind, God-fearing family, served,
Who, when their Mary was thus stricken low,
Watch'd o'er her frail dependant none the less.
At length glad summer to our sphere returns,
And trims anew the lamp of Mary's hope,
The while, with generous care, and tender hands,
They bear her gently to her much-lov'd cot,
Where she, her father, and his sire had drank
Their natal draughts from out life's gushing fount;
From whence, too, kindred vital rills had sped,
Or calm or troubl'd in their terrene flow
Into the swelling depths of Jordan dark.
Nor long has Mary to her home return'd,
Till summer's ta'en her gently by the hand,
And led her from her sick-room to the woods;
Given to her pallid cheeks the blushing rose,

And to her sickly eyes their wonted fires ;
Re-charmed her ear with melody of birds,
And by the margin of a shady brook,
Twin'd for her flaxen curls such floral wreaths
As in her romping girlish days she wore,
When sporting there a thing of life and joy.
But woe is me, when summer pass'd away,
And gone were all the wilding birds and flowers,
Poor Mary's bloom again began to fade,
And ere brown autumn had disrob'd the tree,
They laid her gently by her mother's side.
Thus frail are oft the fond delusive hopes,
Round which the troubled heart delights to cling ;
To-day, they bloom 'neath smiling summer skies,
Pregnant with fruitage fair ; to-morrow comes,
And wintry winds their sad requiem moan.

But come, my Muse, this doleful mood forego,
'Tis summer with us all, nor may'st thou more
Indulge thy humour with a wintry strain :
Come cast abroad thy meditative eye,
And sing of cheery Summer in the town.
Dispersing far the dun expanse of smoke,
That long time o'er our city darkling broods,
The sun shoots forth his animating beams,
Nor court nor alley in these swelling bounds,
But ought to feel his heart-enliv'ning smiles.
And yet, alas ! how many homes there are
(Dark haunts of poverty, of filth, and crime)
Where summer suns are never felt to shine,
And summer joys are never seen to bloom ;

Where moral darkness holds triumphant sway
With strife and rapine, leagued from year to year,
In stern defiance of each generous aim
That would illume such woe-benighted scenes
With gospel light and pure domestic peace.
'Tis here, dread Alcohol, thou stand'st arraign'd,
If not before the bar of human kind,
Where thou hast many interested friends
Who flourish bravely 'neath thy cruel reign,
Yet 'fore His bar from which there's no appeal,
As foulest worker in this direful scene,
And prime abettor of each social wrong.
So, on! ye braves, that wage a deadly war
'Gainst this our common foe, nor halt until
Ye hurl the tyrant Moloch from his throne.

'Tis now, if no untoward course prevail
To check the pace of our commercial speed,
(Or hampered means, or devastating war,)
The wheels of trade right merrily revolve,
And all is bustle, thrift, and cheery din.
The clink of hammer and the roar of forge ;
The ceaseless whirr of iron-carving wheels ;
With spinning-jennies and cloth-weaving looms,
Driv'n by that never-wearying workman, steam,
With echoes faint of quiet handicrafts,
Heard indistinctly 'mid the general din—
All these combin'd, with trumpet-tongue proclaim
A thriving city and a nation's weal.
Toil on, brave hearts ; soon will the evening bell
Release you from the labours of the day,

And send you to a better relish'd meal
And sweeter sleep, by industry procur'd,
Than they possess who still on dainties feed,
And restless toss on beds of softest down.
But first all traces of your toils remov'd
By copious streams of water sparkling clear,
And clad as needs be, when ye woo the fair—
Summer shall take you by the horny hands,
And to some fairy bower conduct the way,
Where you may revel 'mid such sinless joys
As Nature for her children now provides,
Nor dread the coming of to-morrow's sun,
With pain'd remembrance of last evening's cheer.

Ye simple swains who pass unheeding by
The rural bounties richly round you spread,
Come visit us when balmy summer breathes
A savour of the country through the town,
And see how citizens, with not a tithe
Of that abundance which ye lightly prize,
Enjoy kind summer's heart-reviving sweets—
With what a love yon toiling seamstress tends
The myrtle-root upon her window sill,
While from its homely pot of earthenware,
It breathes more joy into her drooping heart
Than sweetest blooms can to the wealthy yield.
From yonder aviary, hark how sweet
The rills of melody that gush along,
Cheering sad hearts, and bright'ning weary eyes ;
While each small warbler not less pleasure feels,
Than when he carol'd 'mid his native wilds.

Yea now o'er all the city's swarthy face,
Bright beams of eye-illuming pleasures play ;
While, pleas'd as mother, who beholds with pride
Her sportive children gamboling round her knee,
She views her sturdy sons and daughters fair,
Trip joyous forth in holiday attire,
From lowly dwelling and from stately hall,
Ardent each fair occasion to improve,
And drink in beauties that upsparkling well
For one and all 'neath Summer's genial sway.

Hail, beauteous Summer, queen of seasons, hail !
Thou deal'st thy favours with no partial hand !
But while thou beautifiest the sylvan scene,
And fructifiest the wavy fields of grain,
Thou leavest not the city to despond,
But thrill'st her bosom with unfeign'd love
Of thee and all thy song-inspiring train ;
While from her family altars there ascends
The grateful incense of her children's thanks
To Him, who bids thee with impartial care
Bestow thy bounties on his creatures all.
Receive then, harbinger of sunny skies,
Flower-spangl'd meadows and song-swelling groves,
This lowly tribute of a rustic lyre,
Which but for thee had never waked to song.

AUTUMN.

I.—THE COUNTRY.

ANOTHER budding, girlish Spring hath passed
Into a flow'ry maiden Summer, who,
Wed to the sun, hath proved a fruitful vine,
A matron staid, whose love of finery
Hath fled 'fore an increase of family cares.
E'en so hath Summer dropt her gaudy robes,
And as befitting her maternal state,
Her passions cooled, and giddy manners gone,
Assumes her vestures of a swarthy hue ;
And in her homely garb and sober gait,
Revisits earth, now mellow Autumn called,
While many earnest aspirations rise
To Him who of the seasons is the God,
That she may speed well on her mission grand
Of mercy to the race of human kind,
And meet their grosser wants with large supply.

Chill are the mornings and the evenings now
With us within our northern latitudes,
And oft inclement our autumnal skies,
While Luna, night's fair queen, with silv'ry beams,
And full round face begins to circumscribe
Day's royal monarch in his wide domains,
And hails him with "good morning" as he leaves
His state pavilion in the hazy east,
And curious urchins that get up betimes,
(Sight not peculiar to the harvest moon,
But most conspicuous 'neath her lustrous sway),

Wond'ring, behold o'erhead two suns at once.
Now ardent sunshine follows copious shower,
And stirs the teeming heart of mother earth,
Till fields wave yellow with their ripened grain,
And orchards rosy with their mellow fruits.

Well pleased, Agricola at length beholds
His acres broad with yellow fruitage crowned,
Which, as it rustles in the gentle breeze,
Now warbles softly in his simple ear,
Melodious as "the music of the spheres,"
That liquid harmony yet undefined,
But lacking which the poet's softest lay
Sir Oracle condemns as prosy trash,
While he abuses sore the hapless bard
As one who hath "no music in his soul."
In these our times, inventive genius speeds
The sweating labours of the harvest field,
And with her keen-edg'd simply wrought machines,
She lays more stubble bare in one brief hour
Than could our grandsires with a troop of hands
Within the longest, most propitious day.
Or where the iron reaper is not used,
We find the mower with his swinging scythe,
And soon 'twill be a rarity to see
The good old-fashioned sickle in employ.
Propitious now, ye winnowing breezes blow,
And shed, O monarch sun, thy warmest beams,
To give old England happy "harvest homes,"
And puir auld Scotland rantin' "jovial kirns."
These merry meetings which in days of yore,

Too oft, alas! on drunken riot fed,
But which, by dint of philanthropic zeal,
Begin to be enjoyed on sober cheer ;
And thus while genius speeds our harvest toils,
On which so much of temporal weal depends,
Our customs, too, seem likely to improve.

Begin the woodlands and the hedgerows now,
Like duteous children who have come of age,
To shower into the lap of mother-earth
Their tributes due—a harvest of ripe leaves,
Which, with a real mother's watchful care,
That elder children aid the younger's weal,
She hands o'er to her carriers, the winds,
For generous transportation far and wide,
In which, when duly mixed with mossy loam
And river sand, the florist has a mould
With which to nourish thro' the winter's cold
The weaker floral children of our clime,
And tenderer exotic, far from home.
Nor do the leafy offerings of the woods,
Not thus commissioned with the winds to roam
And aid their weaker kindred, useless lie ;
But by a wondrous process are absorbed
Anew into the soil from whence they came,
To speed the growth of the returning Spring.

Now love I to frequent the rural nook,
At easy distance from our bustling town,
To meditate among the falling leaves,
And pensively to ponder o'er that date,

Ah ! how momentous, distant now or near,
God knows, and I'm content when I shall drop
A ripen'd leaf from off the tree of life
Into the silent dust from whence I sprung ;
And if my Maker's purpose I have served,
As have the leaves on which I'm treading now,
I shall revive in amaranthine bloom,
And He whose hand re-clothes the naked tree,
Hath power to aid me to this gracious end.
But for the cawing of the rooks, and larks'
Occasional thrills of song at morn and eve,
A stillness hovers o'er the woodland choir—
Silence compared to what was lately heard
When thrush with linnet strove, merle with lark—
Ambitious strove their Maker's praise to hymn.
Again have left us for their sunny homes,
Our joyous heralds of returning Spring—
The timid cuckoo, and the swallow pert ;
Or, cooing now, 'mid Stamboul's spicy groves,
Or twitt'ring round the Hottentot's wild kraals.
Among the feathery natives of our isle,
'Tis moulting season, and sharp little bills
Are busy stripping off worn vestures old,
To be replaced with coats for winter wear
From the rich wardrobe of their Maker kind.
And thou, my pretty household pet, dear Peat,
Art so engaged, and much I miss thy song,
That erst made blithesome here three human hearts,
And bid thee hasten with thy needful task,
Till, with thy beauteous plumage all renewed,
Thou wak'st again heart-echoes to thy lays.

The orchards now are laden with a freight—
A luscious freight of savoury mellow fruits ;
Apples and cherries red as country maid,
Ere city life hath paled her rosy cheeks—
With plums, or brown or of a saffron hue,
And pears of honied flavour, tipt with red.
Nor barren are the wilds to schoolboys now :
The rowan tree and thorn are all a-glow
With dark-red berries, free alike to all ;
While 'mid the brake, the bramble-bush, and sloe,
With glossy coronals of fruits are wreathed.
Now, he who would a floral wealth maintain,
Till dear flow'r-fostering Summer's bright return,
Must woo the warm Conservatory's aid
And cooler greenhouse for his stronger plants,
Or see his garden soon a flow'rless waste,
And scour the mead, hillside, or glen by turns,
Nor find one " heart's-ease " to repay his toils,
Nor " speed-well," with its azure eyes, to shower
One benison upon his thoughtless head.

Methinks e'en to my sciolistic ken,
Nature prepares her for a brief repose,
Nor can we grudge her this respite from toil,
For nobly she her labours has performed.
Yonder white farm-house, radiant with content,
Seems sentinel'd by ranks of bearded men,
And goes to sleep secure within their lines,
Grim Winter's coming onslaughts to abide.
Yonder herd laddie's slowly driving forth
" The milky mothers of the stall " to browse

Upon the meadows that will shortly lie
In slumber 'neath warm coverlets of snow,
And while his charge in byre are snugly housed,
He basks him joyous 'fore the crackling hearth.
Yon bee from out his hive adventurous steals
To have a parting stroll 'mong fading flowers,
And, haply, some stray treasures to obtain,
Ere he on winter bolts his waxen door.
Yon brooklet has a drowsy look, and while
It lacks the treble of its summer voice,
To yonder nodding flow'rets on its banks
It murmurs sleepy lullabies of change.

All, all things rural feel this mighty change,
And mother Autumn, wond'rous cause of all,
She, too, will shortly lay her down and sleep
A long refreshing sleep, and Winter kind
Will come and wrap her in his spotless sheets,
And, wailing sadly, lay her in her grave,
Charging his sturdy henchman, Frost, to keep
Strict guard. He'll for a while be mighty stern,
And watchful at his post ; but by-and-by,
Deeming his charge secure, he grows relax,
Strokes down his grizzly beard, then drops asleep,
And wakes to find encircling him around
A merry troop of sirens from the south,
'Fore whose bewitching airs his stubborn soul
Flies howling fiercely to its native north.
The while his recent charge bounds from the grave,
Not Autumn sear, but budding girlish Spring ;
Meantime, let's see what influence she wields
As Autumn 'mid the civic haunts of men.

II.—THE TOWN.

From out a rising canopy of mist,
Like maiden from her veil of snowy lace,
Our city peers this grey autumnal morn
(Criterion sure, as weather doctors vouch,
That we shall have a glorious harvest day),
As yonder old Cathedral bell peals forth
The hour of five, but indistinctly heard
Through still increasing rattle on the streets,
Of iron hoofs and clank of noisy wheels,
Come forth to brave another round of toil.
On either hand, from crowded pavements rise,
In tramp and shuffle, sounds of human feet,
As forth the navvy, steel-shod to the toes,
Strides to his gang, or smarter tradesman skips
To shop, or yard ; or chatt'ring mill girls glide
In carpet shoes, or nature's snowy pumps,
To tend the iron weavers at their tasks,
Or spinning-jennies, famished sore of late
For lack of fibrous sustenance—their bread.
Ay, there it flows this hazy harvest morn,
That sea of human life, to ebb at eve,
Its noble mission, but in part performed.
And much depends, O Autumn, much on thee
Depends, or that it calmly ebbs and flows
A placid sea between its rocky shores,
Or as a troubled ocean chafes and moans.
Then, spirit kindest of the generous four,
Who hast from Heaven our mundane weal in
charge,

O rain thy oil drops till each atom held
In life's vast ocean dance for very joy.

Yon God-anointed Ruler of the day—
The only one who rules by right divine,
And ne'er defiles his sacred patent held—
King Sol comes forth, and scatters far and wide
The mists that would o'ershade his bright career,
And o'er a thousand fields he joyous eyes
Blithe bands of reapers at their harvest toils,
For whom Agricola has sped by-times
Into the city, labour's open mart,
And while life's spark they draw on to obtain
Fresh fuel to re-coal its waning fires,
The witty joke and humorous song up-well
From merry hearts, and grateful pœans swell
To Him whose blessing fills the "harvest home"
With goodly treasures, and whose smile withheld,
Makes barren fields, rich graves, and stricken
hearts.

Into the country now town's urchins take
Long and excursive rambles, and return
With precious freights of berries black and red,
From prickly bramble, thorn, and rowan tree ;
While oft the rustic, on whose grounds they've
strayed,
With dog and stick lends vigour to their heels.
Makes now the spouse of thrifty working-man
Young eyes with joy to sparkle round her hearth,
As she unhouses from its hiding-place,

Where since last autumn it has idly lain,
That wond'rous pan of brazen hue within,
And jetty black without. Then brings she forth,
From secret nook, a basket reaming o'er
With luscious plums, the which anon conveyed,
With gritty sugar in proportion fair
(I'm told that weight for weight's the general rule!)
Into that wond'rous pan 'mid quantum due
Of water pure ; she, to a second, boils,
Then, 'mid a smacking of expectant lips,
And noisy disputes, who the pan shall lick,
Her jam she pots, then papers it when cool,
Nor brings it forth save on occasions grand.

'Tis now the wealthy citizen prepares
To seek his cozy mansion in the town,
And leaves, regretful leaves, his rural seat,
Or at the coast, or quiet inland nook,
Where he has summered in the lap of ease,
And quite forgot the turmoil of the town ;
But whose departure thence, with rueful face,
The city porter and his dame beheld,
And who now give him joyous welcome home ;—
So varied are the interests of mankind.

Be generous now, ye that have goodly stores,
And think how sorely winter tries the poor ;
That purse plethoric would not miss a coin,
Nor that surfeited larder miss a meal ;
That glowing hearth a faggot well might spare,
Nor would that wardrobe miss a garment less.

Act wisely, and be faithful to your trust,
Ye are but stewards, and must give account.

Homeward returns the jaded tourist now,
Knapsack on back, and sturdy staff in hand,
His leal companion whereso'er he roamed ;
Or up the rugged sides of lordly Ben,
Or down the dark defiles of lone Glencoe,
Or o'er the heathery track of dreary moor,
Or by the banks of classic Highland lake,
All lately buzzing with the stranger's voice ;
Now hastening all, as Autumn fades away,
Into their native silence to relapse.
Or, haply, the adventurous twain had left
Their home behind to visit foreign strands,
And may have wandered far o'er sunny France,
Or through the snow-clad wintry home of Tell,
Have sung of freedom 'mid Italian groves,
And wept in Rome o'er Rome's departed fame ;
But now return to fond, impatient hearts—
Joyous return, and tell to wondering ears
What they have seen and heard in other lands,
And worship British liberty anew.

The sturdy schoolboy now must lay aside
The deadly tube, still tingling from the charge
That brought yon hapless woodcock to the ground,
For Cæsar garrulous, and learn how sped
The Roman cohorts in the Gallic wars.
The fishing wand and tackle lately plied
With true Waltonian zeal must shortly yield

To Euclid, while with compass, rule, and square
The student braves again that teasing task,
"Pons asinorum," to get safely o'er.
Now kind mammas, and doating sisters fair,
Are busily engaged in packing up,
With tender care, huge boxes for the town,
With many secret love-gifts therein placed ;
The while papa, 'mid shakings of the head,
Sums up the balance in his banker's hands,
Yet pleased if but his darling boy may bloom
In vigour by the aged parent tree,
So that his sister plants may yet obtain,
When he is gone, warm shelter 'neath his shade.

Ah, ye dear objects of parental prayers,
Of many sunny hopes, and dark'ning fears,
Act well your part when ye to us return,
And shun, O nobly shun each gilded haunt
Of hydra-headed vice within our midst.
O sadden not those hopeful hearts at home ;
O'ershadow not that father's brow with gloom ;
Dim not that mother's love-lit eyes with tears ;
Blanch not with shame that sister's rosy cheeks,
Nor damp that little brother's buoyant glee.

Our city mercers now are all astir
To aid the public weal, and advertise,
Below cost price, their stock of autumn goods ;
While miss and master dun their poor papa,
And 'fore his troubled eyes the broad-sheet flaunt
That tells them where they'll have dead bargains all.

Now beau and belle discard the light gay robes
They wore when at Queen Summer's merry court,
And don their stronger garbs of darker hues,
To grace Queen Autumn's kind tho' pensive sway.

Again our halls and lecture rooms invite
The studious artizan from rural scenes,
Where he has spent his leisure hours of late,
To plight anew his troth to Science fair—
Religion's oft abused, yet steady friend,
Who, while she aids the philosophic ken
Of learned sage, to labour's simple mind,
She truths recondite shows in common things.
Philanthropy and eloquence combined
Prepare to fight another hard campaign,
And storm afresh the citadel of vice ;
And chiefly 'gainst thee, O foul demon drink,
To wage the strife—'twill yet ensure thy fall.

Thus, dear, heart-stirring Autumn, I have sketched,
Tho' rudely so, thy influence sublime,
'Mid quiet rural scenes and noisy towns,
And found thee generously kind in all.
I've watched thy smiles mature earth's varied fruits,
And heard thee carol o'er the harvest home ;
I've seen thee pluck the brown leaves from the tree,
And mused upon my own autumnal fall ;
I've felt thy presence 'mid the jostling throng
Of city life, and watched thy goodness there
Illume with joy the troubled face of man ;
And thus observant, I have raised to Him,

Whose almoner thou art, a grateful song—
A small thankoffering to His loving heart
Who sends thee with his largesses to all
His creatures : and implored his potent aid,
That, while these mercies serve a gracious end,
Poor famish'd souls might find "the living bread."

WINTER.

I.—THE COUNTRY.

AGAIN our old terraqueous ball hath wheeled
Her annual circuit round the central orb,
And half her massive bulk is now consigned
By the omniscient Architect who formed,
Who launched, and keeps her rolling in her sphere—
By Him is now consigned to the severe
Yet beneficial care of Winter grim,
Now in the zenith of his rugged power,
And whose loud blast peeled forth the dying knell
Of the departed year, and who conducts,
As suits the mood of his despotic will,
The New Year stripping to his father's throne—
Or 'mid the stillness of a sullen calm,
Or hurricane of wild triumphant shouts,
From out the roaring throats of conquering winds—
Or o'er a carpet fair of crispy snow,
Or gelid pavement of a leaden hue;
Nor hastens he to leave the stripping's side,
But tends him duly morning, noon, and night,

Till Spring comes tripping from the balmy south,
And soon outweighs him in the youth's regards ;
Then, grumbling, he departs for other scenes,
And takes our sister hemisphere by storm,
And farthest Ind pays tribute to his sway.
But soon returns he to his northern home,
Where none disputes his right supreme to rule ;
And calling round him his attendants fierce,
Fresh strength to muster for a new advance,
In season due, upon our western shores—
Recruits his waning Frost, remoulds his hail,
Piles up afresh his lessening mounds of snow,
And nurses with a grim and fierce delight
His savage Winds for the appointed fray,
And marshalling all his mighty hosts to arms,
Fiercely beleaguers half the globe anew.

When Winter rules, as now, the opening year,
How changeable his moods ere yet old earth
Hath once on her diurnal axis turned.
But yesternorn he blew a clarion blast,
And forth his winds rushed yelling to the charge :
Loud groaned the forests, fell the gnarled trees,
And quaked the village as they thundered through—
Sweeping as when on Balaclava's field,
The British horse twice clove their living way,
Sheer through the frantic hosts of haughty Russ.
Anon there is a calm, and down he showers
From out his murky vaults, chill, plashy sleet ;
But changeful as his own wide scampering winds,
And ere the sun hath yet the zenith gained

(The which must be recorded by the clock,
For nought of him to-day hath yet been seen),
He from his granary in the scowling north,
Down rattles noisy showers of biting hail—
Winds up the story of the sad, brief day,
With flaky falls of terra-mantling snow,
And Cynthia when she mounts her royal car,
To course round her domains, well pleased, beholds
(As do a shining host of lustrous stars)
Her own bright face reflected in the snow;
Nor will the orient red-faced sun prevail
On Winter to withdraw the tyrant Frost,
Whose iron grasp the sceptre now maintains.

O wonder-working Frost, what art thou? say,
From whence thy searching power? thy nature what?
With what dost spin thy wiry threads? how weave
The gauze-like web with which thou spannest now
Yon voiceless brook? How lay'st on fold on fold,
Till lakes and seas thou solid mak'st as rocks?
With what dost petrify the loamy earth?
How worm'st thyself into her inner heart?
From whence the hammer, and the wedges whence,
With which thou split'st huge fragments from the cliff,
And send'st them thundering o'er the dark abyss?
With what dost thou lay prostrate giant oaks,
O'er whose head centuries had scathless rolled?
Seen through the magnifying lens art thou,
What learned savans tell us thou appear'st—
“ A Power composed of multitud'nous parts
“ Of tiny salts, with forms distinct: some hook'd,

"Others like double wedges nicely shaped,"
Which, breathed upon by Winter's ireful breath,
And wide diffused thro' water, earth, and air,
Produce the mighty changes we behold.
Ah well ; "such knowledge is too high for me,"
A dull, unlettered dolt, "to understand ;"
Yet in my ignorance I can admire,
And with a relish no less keen mayhap
Than those well-versed in mysteries so profound,
The works of Frost, or when he pencils quaint
The window panes, or fells the naked trees,
Fringes with icicles the dripping caves,
Splinters the rock, or freezes up the streams.

'Tis when in such a mood I dearly love
Grim Winter's face, and wander from the town,
His handiwork decisive to behold
Within the precincts of the rural scene.
'Tis there my Fancy—rough, untutor'd child—
The best dame Nature had to spare for me,
And meet companion for an unlearn'd bard—
Loves dearly to invest, with robes of state,
The ruling season of the infant year.
His frizzy locks she graces with a crown
Of dark green laurel, richly studded o'er
With sparkling gems, and for a border fringed
With pendant icicles of quaint device ;
Enrobes him in a cloak of mosses green,
Girt with a rustling band of holly twigs,
All fretted o'er with strings of snowy pearls ;
A star of ray cerulean gives his breast,

And for a sceptre, in his rigid hand,
Places a rod of hail-bespangled ice.
Thus robed by Fancy, with delight I hail
The storm-king's advent on our shores again.

There breathes a stirring vigour through the air
This morn, which in the body undiseased
Of man and beast, urges the vital tide,
With healthful speed along its mazy way.
Yonder the sun his grand pavilion leaves,
And scales the eastern battlements of heaven,
Imparting to the sentry clouds that roll
Backwards in haste 'fore his victorious charge,
The fiery splendours of his ruddy blaze ;
At his approach the welkin clears apace,
And shows a wealth of cloud-land here and there
Rang'd various, and of fantastic shapes.
Here tow'ring forests nod their plummy heads ;
There crags o'er crags are piled, and through yon strip
Of azure sea, cloud-ships sail proudly on,
Laden with treasure for this nether sphere.

But let me now withdraw my gaze perplexed
From off the glorious firmament, bright source
Which, ere yet Bethlehem's peculiar star
Had caught the puzzled ken of Eastern sage,
With gods earth's eldest nations had supplied ;
(Hath not e'en Bible-reading Britain still
Idolaters more base than those of old ?)
And which since ere its Author spread it forth,
And earth prepared for intellectual man,

Hath to all tribes a source of wonder been,
And will be till its latest cycle run—
'Mid crash and flame to Chaos it returns,
And in its stead a brighter shall arise,
Ne'er to dissolve, but be admired for aye,
By brighter intellects—a blood-bought race.

How dead now to the superficial eye
Appears old mother Earth—cold, stiff, and dead
Within the cruel grasp of tyrant Frost,
Whose touch hath chill'd her to the very heart,
Her soft warm bosom petrified and bared,
Stiffen'd her limbs, and wrapt her body up
Within an ample sheet of virgin white,
Till now she wears the semblance sad of death.
And yet 'tis but a semblance, nothing more,
And from my ken occult soe'er the how,
E'en now the victor's seeming deadly touch
His victim purifies from noxious dross,
Caught in a lengthy round of busy toil,
And which if not remov'd, were death indeed.
His chill and nitrous breath shall yet instil
Fresh life into her heart, and she will bound
From out her seeming death refreshed and pure.

Upon the frozen bosom of the loch,
Coatless and sweating at their healthy sport,
The curlers now pursue "their roaring play:"
Forth from the steady hand the polished stone
Flies screaming o'er the ice, and crowns the "T;"
And, gathering round it an array of friends,

Defies, 'twould seem, expulsion from the spot,
Till, aided by the sweep of switching broom,
A ponderous enemy comes thundering up,
And dashing in their 'midst with well-aimed stroke,
And ringing crack, dislodges from his seat
The braggart chief, and his protecting friends
Sends whizzing devious o'er the glist'ning field,
Then settles proudly on the vacant throne,
Though soon, mayhap, to be dislodged in turn.
Pursue the skaters now, like phantom ships,
Their airy voyage o'er a solid sea,
And 'mid a maze of windings in and out,
Adventurous poised at times on single foot,
Engrave their names upon the glittering ice,
Or track their course with hieroglyphics quaint,
Then darting swift as arrows from their bows,
Career across the loch from shore to shore.
While round the margin of the stirring scene
Blithe troops of rosy-coloured urchins slide
In merry glee, or, seizing by the hand
Some sister fair, 'mid welkin-rending peals
Of laughter clear, they drag her swift along,
Till some unlucky roadster missing foot,
They joyous roll upon the slippery way.

How hard and faithless to the hob-nailed boot
Of yonder swain the country wayside now ;
Yet with plough-irons on his shoulders square
The sturdy churl goes whistling on his way,
Bent for the ruddy glow of blacksmith's hearth,
Roaring by yonder clump of naked trees,

From whence comes dancing through the thin blue air,
Clear as a bell, the anvil's cheery ring.
And there, while Vulcan's sinewy arm refits,
Pointed and sharp, the coulter for the plough,
Which now in yonder furrow idly lies
Snow-clad within the rigid grasp of frost,
Boastful the swain talks of his late campaign,
Where from his stout compeers he proudly bore
His envied laurels off the bloodless field.

See the poor horse, forelock and mane hoar-clad,
How tim'rously he treads the glassy path,
Fire flashing from his hoofs, too barely shod,
And flying wide apart, as on he drags
His heavy load of fuel from the mine,
Cozy to keep the dwellers at the farm.
Poor beast, could not thy owner spend on thee
What paltry sum would send thee to the forge,
To have thy battered shoes set up anew,
And thus ensure thy noble limbs from harm,
Quaking and sweating in his service now?
His driver, too, seems anxious to assist
The troubled gait of his four-footed friend,
And labours hard to hold his head erect,
Believing much in the old homely say—
'Tis easy swimming when the head's upborne.
Thou actest well, kind heart, and it doth please
Him who hath fashioned thee and thy poor beast,
And when thou reel'st, mayhap, on life's rough road,
For this his providence may prove thy friend.

Deserted now the fields by man and beast.
Nor ploughman's whistle, nor the milkmaid's song,
Nor low of cattle, nor the neigh of steed,
Nor bleat of lamb, delights his simple ear
Who finds sweet music in such simple sounds—
Evanished all—those to in-door employ,
These to the shade of stable, byre, and cot.
Plies now the thresher in the dusty barn
"The weary swinging flail," and forth the grain
Leaps at each sturdy stroke. The herd-boy now,
No longer with his charge on verdant mead,
Brings fodder to their stalls, or, harder fate,
Turnips he washes for their pulpy mash,
Till bites he in distress his fingers numb.
But see him by the ingle-blaze o' nights ;
The little rogue has quite forgot his woes,
While 'gainst the maids some frolic still he plans,
And must be bribed by Jenny, Moll, and Jane,
To go to bed what night their lovers call.
Beneath the cart-shed now demurely sits
The farm-yard sultan, strutting Chanticleer,
With all his harem by his ruffled sides ;
Cowering and sad, he eyes his wives askance,
As if he felt increase of family cares,
Now winter seals up Nature's generous hand,
And sorely grieves his independent heart,
That he must crave the charitable dole
Solicitous at barn or kitchen door ;
But gaining heart, he rears his scarlet crest,
And proudly crows defiance to the storm.

Ah, how propitious came these robes of snow
That cover upland, plain, and hill, at which
Yon ruddy sun's most potent noontide rays,
Obliquely now and ineffective thrown,
Are shot well nigh in vain, so firm hath Frost
Impressed, in seeming hate, his seal on all.
Yet in heaven's grand economy of things,
His very wrath conserves a gracious end,
And universal Nature's voice shall hymn
His praise ere long for all this rugged care,
Though voiceless, bleak, and bare she slumbers
now.

Solemn, yet sad, the silence that prevails
Round yonder thicket drear of leafless trees,
Whose outposts with their limbs reflected gaunt,
Bony, and weird in the surrounding snow—
Seem but, in very truth, the ghosts of trees.
How few the dwellers of the woods and wilds
Whose leafy honours brave the wintry sky :
Then doubly prized when all besides are shorn.
The laurel and the holly ever green,
(Much-envied coronal for Poet's brows,
From which the fates have spared this brow of
mine ;)
And from the hoary oak, the misletoe,
With which old father Christmas decks his head,
When he revisits earth with memories dear
Of that best day our planet ere has seen :—
These precious all, though spiteful blasts assail,
And havoc make among their honours green.

Ah me, where now the little feathery pipes
That charmed these woodlands with their mellow
tunes?

Where the dawn-greeting lark? the merle, where?
And all the humbler tribes of sylvan song?
Where find they now their food? their shelter,
where?

Amid this wormless, seedless, shadeless scene.
Thousands, alas, in ruts and holes expire,
'Neath old tree roots, or hedge, or oozy bank :
And while some gain the charity of man,
The hand that made them still a remnant saves
That yet shall wake these voiceless woods to song.
And thou, dear hardy Robin, friend of man,
And sharer of his board and cot at will,
How soul-reviving now thy little song
Falls on the passing traveller's ear, and cheers
Him blithely forward on his wintry way !
Or should he not reward thee for thy lay
With grateful heart and open generous hand,
I tell thee, bird, thou'rt richer far than he.
Thou, too, sweet warbler of my lowly cot,
Song-trilling "Peat," well worthy of a place
(Despite what critics say to the reverse)
In all the seasons of these homely strains,
Sing on ! sing on ! winter thou canst not feel
Where all thy little wants meet large supply.

And say, amid a scene so chill and drear,
Where find ye lodgment for your tiny seeds,
Ye floral children of these woods and fields ?

Thou red-lipped daisy of the modest head,
Thou fragrant violet of azure eye,
And all ye variegated primrose tribes,
Whose balmy breaths, and many-tinted hues,
Will scent and beautify the coming spring—
Tell me where dwell ye through rude winter's
storms ?

The task be mine, the flaky snow replies,
To shield them from the rigorous hand of frost,
Wherever stored by autumn ere she died—
In chinks of rock, or 'neath the boulder's edge,
Or gorsy root of hedge, or sedgy bank.
How eye and heart-reviving to behold;
Or garnishing the gnarled trunk of oak ;
Or fringing soft the brim of sylvan well ;
Or dappling thick the front of frowning crag—
The velvet mossy tribes, the greener aye,
As aye the colder Winter's gelid breath.

The bickering brook, imprisoned at its source
Within the bosom of yon jagged cliff,
No more goes dancing joyous on his way
Down to the stream, athwart whose shivering
breast

Silent and slow creeps the sure-footed frost ;
And tawny Reynard now hard-pressed for food,
And oft on foray to the farm-yard bent,
Steals to its edge, and finds e'en drink denied,
Or treading cautious, to its centre gains,
And laps the fast decreasing icy flood.

Thus winter o'er the rural scene presides,
And all is hushed into a solemn pause.
Nor wood, nor water, earth nor air present
The beauteous forms, the various pleasing sounds,
That speak the presence of a working day.
But Nature takes a quiet night's repose,
Waiting the resurrection morn of spring,
When, bursting from their wintry bonds, the woods
Resume their vernal robes, the earth re-teems
With flowers and fruits, while through the quivering air
From song of bird and hum of busy bee,
From low of cattle and the bleat of lamb,
Symphoniously combined, upwards ascends
One joyous madrigal of praise to Him,
The great Creator God, who calls them forth,
And round whose throne the varied seasons roll.

II.—THE TOWN.

We saw thee, Winter, in thy sternest mood,
Amid the rural scene, where all things lay
Stiffened and stark beneath the seal of frost,
And fields and woods were drear and voiceless all,
With little to relieve the weary eye
From off a wide expanse of dazzling snow,
Save here and there a spiral wreath of smoke
That upward curled into the wintry sky,
From wayside cottage, or inlying farm.

No stirring sound to fill the listening ear,
Save from a noisy cavalcade of crows,
Bent for the outskirts of the neighbouring town,
There, haply, to pick up their morning's meal.
And yet, withal, grim Winter, thou had'st there
A cheerful aspect, and a healthy breath,
That sent the blood a-dancing through the veins,
And stirr'd the heart with a superior joy,
Than e'en glad Summer with her rustling woods,
Her feathery warblers, and her flow'ry meads,
Hath influence at all times to impart.

But now, alas ! how rueful is the change
In thy rough temper'ment, thou king of storms,
When o'er the city we behold thee reign,
The boist'rous ruler of a dismal scene.
Not that thou rul'st the noisy haunts of men
More harshly than the quiet rural shades
Where late we saw thee—ay, admiring saw,
Thy pow'r proclaimed by all-subduing frost ;
But that thy mood, aye fickle at the best,
Hath now assumed a gruffer, wilder form.
Full well we saw the coming change foretold,
When yesternight a stormy cavalcade
Of murky clouds pursued the setting sun
Along the outskirts of the troubled sky—
Hotly pursued him down the hazy west,
While brumal vapours from the sweating earth
Thickly uprose in choking volumes gray,
Night making doubly drear, and shrouding all
In country and in town, for miles around,

With one huge canopy of densest fog ;—
So dense that e'en our citizens, perplexed
And troubled were to find their own abodes ;
While strangers halloo'd to the passing " 'bus,"
Right glad, if haply it went on their way,
To patronise this boon of modern times.
But scarce had tolled the bells the midnight hour,
When moaning low at first, but gaining strength
Apace, the threatened storm came roaring on,
And into tatters tore the mantle gray,
In which old earth had wrapt her cow'ring form
To shield her from the fury of the blast,
'Fore which, anon, in fitful, bitter gusts,
Came driving showers of snow-dissolving sleet.

God help the mariner through such a night
Upon the rolling main, when we on land
Tremble to hear the howlings of the blast,
And sleep afrightened from our pillows flies ;
Nor brings the advent of the cheerless morn
Slow pacing from the leaden-colour'd east,
Aught of improvement in her joyless train.
Hark, hark, how gruff Boreas fiercely raves,
As wildly speeds he through the streets and lanes,
Whirling aloft in wreathy columns vast,
The plashy snow, or rolls it o'er the ground,
Or hurls it prone, as suits his savage will,
Against the easement of the lordly hall,
Or dingy front of the plebian cot.
Seizes he now the giant chimney stalk,
And throws it headlong from its solid base,

Or rocks it to and fro in sportive mood,
As if he gamboled 'mid the forest drear.
Deserted now the busy thoroughfare,
Save by a hurrying few who must obey,
Howe'er unfit, necessity's stern calls.
Forth now from sheltering nooks peer anxious eyes
Into the fitful storm, ready to seize
The briefest lull to hasten on their way ;
While from the dripping housetops downward
slides,
Not always scathless in its prone descent,
The mimic avalanche of melting snow.

When view I through my hazy window pane,
Myself secure from each returning gust,
The dismal scene which yonder streets present,
On such a blustering winter morn as this,
I waft a prayer up to Jehovah's ear,
Who calls a calm or rides upon the storm,
For succour to "the helpless, homeless poor,"
And feel full keenly too how undeserved
Have been the mercies which his gracious hand
Hath through a lifetime heaped on me and mine,
And humbled sore to think we have rebelled,
When in his wisdom he saw fit at times,
For our best weal, to use the chast'ning rod.
The season this for Christian Charity
To shower her favours with a generous hand,
To cheer the ailing, comfort the bereaved,
The widow and the fatherless to tend,
Assist the honest heart and willing hands,

That fain would toil, but now must idly hang
For lack of work 'neath winter's rigorous sway.

A golden harvest theirs who cater now
For the amusements of the public throng,
That for the day's vicissitudes demands
Relaxive pastimes through the long dark night ;
Nor ought the public call to be denied,
Since men have wants peculiar to their race,
Nor surfeit may their bodies, while their minds
Are stunted for the lack of social food ;
Though care should be observed e'en more than is,
That all such mental pabulum be sound.
Paint now the tragic and the comic muse,
The deeds and manners of a bygone age,
Or with a nice precision deftly draw
The greener follies of a modern growth.
Yet to the theatre, whate'er the cause,
A fama clings, which, to no mean extent,
Stinks i' the nostrils of good men and true ;
So let her curators examine well
Where lurks the plague spot, and its nature what,
Nor spare the knife on the infected part.
But to be shunned as haunts more dangerous far,
By all who cherish virtue in their hearts—
The gay saloon, now in meridian blaze,
Where Music, to improve her tawdry charms,
(In virgin bloom she could not flourish there)
Calls in the priest of Bacchus to her aid.
And while the fulsome orgies loudly swell,
Drinks hard herself to wile her victims on.

Dread haunts are these, to breathe whose febrile air,
Virtue, once lured, soon sickens, droops, and dies.

Here much I prize, ye philanthropic band,*
Your generous labours for the public weal,
Your trips excursive for our artizans,
When summer grandeurs deck the rural scene;
But chiefly when blithe autumn's work is done,
And surly winter comes to close the year,
Your weekly gatherings of the sons of toil,
Where harmony is to instruction wed,
And music captivates the human heart,
With aids none other save her native charms.
'Tis now our lecture rooms, our institutes,
And other boons peculiar to our age,
Offer the studiously inclined such aids
As, with God's blessing on the weaker means,
Exalt man to the dignity of man,
Heaven's second born, and fair Creation's lord.
'Tis now our printing presses most increase
Our golden scrolls of wisdom old and new,
Or those where humour with instruction blends,
Whose smiles make sunny winter's darkest nights.
And last, but best of all our winter joys,
There are the dear amenities of home—
Dear at all seasons to the honest heart,
Whose chords by virtue's gentle hand are tuned;
But chiefly so when roars the blast abroad,
There reigns a summer calm around the hearth,

* The Glasgow Abstiners' Union.

Where all the strong affinities that join
Our better natures in a golden chain,
To their first cause, are welded link by link,
If left unsnapt by folly's reckless hand.

Thus, Winter, though thy nature is severe,
And grimly stern thy far extending sway,
Thou bring'st a troop of pleasures in thy train,
And giv'st a relish to our sober cheer.
Thy roaring winds and bitter driving showers,
Thy gelid breath, thy frost, and flaky snow,
Convey old mother Autumn to her grave,
And earth prepare for the return of Spring ;
Give to the summer breeze a healthy tone,
And aid succeeding Autumn's varied fruits.
Thy rigorous rule within the city's bounds,
Opes up to charity the heart of man,
Inspiring him to cheer the frail and lorn,
And minister to poverty's fell wants,
While 'neath the roof where smiling plenty reigns,
Thou art a very prince of social joys.
Old Christmas too is thine, that happy feast,
Commemorative of His bless'd advent,
Who bled that e'en the poorest of our race
Might feast on heav'nly bread, and live for aye.

Accept, then, Winter, of this rough refrain,
As thy own temper rough, nor to be named,
With what poetic garlands thou'st had oft
Wreath'd for thee by great master poets' hands ;
Yet ne'ertheless an offering of the heart,

An humble offering from a grateful heart,
Whose chords thy icy fingers oft have thrill'd ;
Whose inner depths thy storm-winds oft have
stirr'd

With one great irrepressible desire,
To sing thy wonders in a simple song,
The while the ruling spirit of the strain
Should be a tribute of adoring praise
To Him, the mighty "uncaus'd cause of all,"
At whose behest the circling seasons roll,

THE DRUNKARD'S DREARY HAME.

In a cauld cheerless hame there sits
A mither wi' twa bairns—
The auldest coorin at her fit,
The youngest in her arms.
They're greetin for a wee bit piece,
But she has nane to gie ;
Whilst warm, frae aff her breakin' heart,
The tear starts to her e'e.

Tho' puir the claes upon their backs,
She keeps them snod an' clean ;
But, och ! sae mony patches tell
That better days they've seen ;

Yet if rare worth but gat its due,
That mither weel micht claim
A better fate than's met within
The drunkard's dreary hame.

Grim poortith scowls on a' aroun',
An' ilka thing looks bare,
An' weary want an' hardships are
The only plenty there ;
Whilst drink's sure badge o' misery,
Fills up that broken pane,
To keep the win' frae soughin thro'
The drunkard's dreary hame.

For seats, there's but twa cripple chairs,
Supported by the wa'—
Ane o' them minus o' a leg,
The ither's back in twa ;
Nae soun' delf on the dresser stan's,
But twarrie broken shards—
Nor wud that dresser's sel' been there,
Had it no been the laird's.

An' whaur a cozie bed should be,
There's but a pickle strae ;
Nor mat, nor blanket to be seen,
They've a' been tane away
By him wha vow'd to keep them richt
An' shield them frae the storm,
But lea'es them noo in want to pine
Forsaken an' forlorn.

Yet patiently that mither bears
Her heavy load o' wae,
An' fain she'd gang to seek for him,
But kens na' whaur to gae.
She waits na by the cheery lowe,
But by the cauld hearthstane—
There's neither coal nor sticks to warm
The drunkard's dreary hame.

What wild demoniac roar was that
That strikes the mither's ear!
What mak's that puir wee callan cling
Close to her side wi' fear!
His faither's stancher in to the door,
An' frichts the lovin' wean,
That's aften ran to welcome him,
But noo thae days are gane.

O! quickly may thae days return,
Ne'er mair to gang awa,
When that wee heart will bound wi' joy
As to his hame he'll draw.
An' may our kintra soon get redd
O' ae black cause o' shame,
An' proudly boast she canna show
Ae drunkard's dreary hame.

THE HOPEFUL TEAR;

OR, THE CONFIDING WIFE TO HER REPENTANT
HUSBAND.

O ! TOUCH not with thy trembling hand
That bright ethereal thing,
Borne to thee from a far-off land
Upon good angel's wing.
Ah ! to me 'tis more precious now,
Than the most lustrous gem
Is to the richly jewelled brow •
Of royal diadem.

Yes, love—that heaven-distill'd pure drop—
Warm, gushing from thy heart,
Hath raised within me such a hope
As soothes the burning smart,
That's rankled long and deep within
My trouble-boding soul,
To think thou bad'st so fair to win
The drunkard's dreadful goal.

But, no ; that little trembling tear
Bright, glistening in thine eye,
Hath banish'd now my every fear,
And better days are nigh ;
It tells me that thy word once given
To thy confiding wife,
Who oft 'mid trials sore hath striven,
To smooth thy path through life,

Not all the powers of passion fell,
E'en were they leagued to come,
Shall ever tempt thee more to sell
The comforts of our home,
For such vile, trashy, bastard joys,
As publicans retail—
Where peace expires 'mid ribald noise,
And real pleasure's stale.

It tells me that the lonely night,
The sickening anxious day,
For very shame have ta'en their flight,
Ne'er to return for aye.
It tells me that thy big arm chair,
Shall no more vacant stand ;
But as of yore—sole monarch there—
Thou'lt rule our happy band.

It whispers to each pretty one—
“Thou'lt never more be wrong'd;”
It shows blithe plenty hither run,
Panting to be enthron'd.
It tells us that the Great Supreme,
By mortals, how forgot !
Shall be the all-absorbing theme,
Within our little cot.

Then touch not with thy trembling hand
That bright ethereal thing,
Borne to thee from a far-off land
Upon good angel's wing.

Ah! to me 'tis more precious now,
 Than the most lustrous gem
 Is to the richly jewelled brow
 Of royal diadem.

SONG—WHISKY'S AWA'.

AIR—"The Lass o' Glenshee."

COME hither wife, Maggie—my life's greatest brag aye—
 Han' down my auld fiddle that hings on the wa',
 An' owre that bricht leerie,* my ain couthie dearie,
 Wha wadna be cheerie when Whisky's awa' ?
 A dark smeekey hallan' was ance a' our dwallin',
 Whaur rarely ae blink o' God's daylight we saw ;
 An' tho' ye wished better, strong appetite's fetter
 To drink held me debtor—but Whisky's awa'.

We wear our ain claes noo, on cauld wintry days noo',
 Nae langer wi' them at our "Uncle's" we ca'—
 Nae langer we differ, an' try wha's the stiffer,
 But kisses we niffer, sin' Whisky's awa'.
 An' tho', I maun grant ye, we've mony a wantie,
 Oor biggin sae narrow, and income sae sma';
 Fu' bienly an' trig yet—fu' crouselly an' big yet—
 We'll drive our ain gig yet, sin' Whisky's awa'.

* The gas light.

Our bairnies grew duddie, till, bare as ilk scuddie,
That i' their nests flichter in yonder green shaw,
Their leggies gat wraith-like, their cheekies gat death-
like—

They're baith meat and claith-like, sin' Whisky's awa'.
We ne'er had a shillin' to spare for their schuilin',
Strong drink's craikin' thrapple aye swallowed it a';
But wife, dinna doubt it, let wha like dispute it,
Wee Jock's for the pu'pit, sin' Whisky's awa'.

Our vera bit yardie, ance a' my regard aye,
Was aft sae mislippeden nocht thrave in't ava;
Flow'r beds were neglecked, vile weeds grew unchecked,
Till Will by the fecket dragged Whisky awa'.
Syne Thrift, the niest minute, threw aff coat and bonnet,
Set kail an' patatas—gat flow'rets to blaw—
Till a' looks sae neat noo, that for a rare treat noo
It canna be beat noo, sin' Whisky's awa'.

Sae come, ye mad thinkers—ye puir whisky drinkers—
Nae mair yer hard winnin's let publicans draw;
Frae poortith get weeded, get wives and weans cleeded,
Ye'll find its a' needed when Whisky's awa'.
A rich brimmin' measure o' pure guileless pleasure—
Believe me, it sparkles in cot as in ha'—
Wad ye but procure it, syne firmly secure it,
Try this to ensure it—put Whisky awa'.

THE SCOURIE DAY.

ADDRESSED TO A GENEROUS FRIEND WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR
WITH WHAT HE STOOD VERY MUCH IN WANT OF, VIZ., AN
UMBRELLA.

WHEN gusty April showers drove keen
Into my half-shut drumlie e'en,
An' scarce on a' the street was seen,
 Save my puir sel',
Ae head outside the shelterin' screen
 O' an umbrell'.

When ilk door-cheek and close was packit
Wi' draigle-tail and dreepin' jacket
An' crinolines gat thrawn and rackit
 Out o' a' form,
An' greetin' bairns sped hame distrackit,
 To shun the storm.

When frae the housetaps rushed the flood
Doun thro' the roans wi' roaring thud ;
And at street corners pouterin' stood,
 Wi' stick in han',
Drench'd "Charlies," reddin' weel's they could
 The chockit stran'.

When apple barrows were deserted ;
Coal carriers frae their creels had darted
To splice some cronie, noble hearted,
 For ae wee gill
O' aqua vitæ, whilk's asserted
 To cure a' ill.

When cabs along the street gaed tearin',
 An' busses laden 'bune a' bearing ;
 Porters rinnin', carters swearin'
 Big aiths an' fast,
 On nags that sideways still kept veerin'
 To jouk the blast.

When I in downright desperation,
 Ram-stam ran to my habitation,
 An' to add to my consternation,
 While passers laucht,
 Upon yon muck-heap's black location
 Fell belly flaucht.

Ah then, tho' in a wretched plicht,
 I danced in very joy outricht,
 As an auld neebor hove in sight,
 Bane dry himsel',
 An' spread abune me, droukit wicht,
 His big umbrell'.

Noo dinna toss yer heads on high,
 Ye bantlin's o' the scornfu' eye,
 That hae umbrellas aye laid bye
 To ser yer thank ;
 Ye'll aiblins fin' that, wat or dry,
 I'm nae sheepshank.

Wer't no that I am something blate,
 And blastin' egotism hate,
 I'd crouselly craw'd wi' heart elate

For joy indeed,
Owre favours o' a recent date
Frae south the Tweed.

But thanks, my generous-hearted frien',
Whase favours I hae aften seen,
I'm noo provided wi' a screen
Frae win' an' rain;
A family umbrell', I ween—
An' 'tis my ain.

Did not thy modesty refuse
To leave her shade, the Doric muse
Thro' auld Sanct Mungo's toun wad rouse
Thy generous fame;
An' daur e'en scandal to abuse
Thy honest name.

Noo pour awa ye April clouds,
An' wrap a' i' yer liquid shrouds,
I'se join nae mair yon courin' crowds
At door an' close,
But bauldly brave yer fiercest thuds
That o'er me cross.

Noo, borrowin' neebors, ye maun ken
I've twa things that I'll never len'—
My guidwife Maggie, couthie hen,
An' my umbrell';
Sae ye without them baith maun fen'
As fits yersel'.

God bless the donor o' the boon,
 Ilk stap o' life's wee journey roun' ;
 May dark misfortune's wild simoon
 Ne'er roun' him rage,
 But lowly fa' the afternoon
 O' his auld age.

An' when he gains the border line
 (It may be sune, but may't be syne,)
 'Twixt life and death, yon dark ravine,
 God speed him o'er,
 To life renewed, ne'er to decline,
 On Canaan's shore.

A FAREWHEEL TO MY AULD HAT, AND WELCOME TO MY NEW.

FAREWHEEL, auld hat ! yet ere thou gang,
 Thou'rt weel deservin' o' a sang,
 And as I'm no that unca thrang,
 I'se e'en fa' tae,
 An' lilt thee aff at random bang
 Twa verse or sae.

Thou'st been to me a sérvant true,
 An' mony storms we hae cam' thro',
 Tho' sunny blinks, and no a few,
 On us hae shone,
 Sin' that day when I clapt thee new
 My pow upon.

Wow, sirs! but I was wond'rous fain,
An' aiblins e'en a wee thocht vain,
To think that I could ca' my ain
 A hat sae braw,
That to the poet's scanty train
 Great croods wad draw.

For wha noo deem it worth their while
To search aneath a batter'd tile
For oucht o' that ethereal oil
 That Genius burns,
When for his gems the virgin soil
 He upward turns.

Na, na, the Doric days are fled
When poortith's bards were lodged and fed,
When langsyne, as I've somewhaur read,
 Ae cantie sang,
Broucht them a supper and a bed
 Whaur'er they'd gang.

But noo the saucy sisters nine,
Maun hae their gallants dressed sae fine,
Forbye a rowth o' yellow coin
 By Fortune gien;
Or what avails their "rage divine"—
 No ae brass preen.

An' yet, auld hat, e'en in oor days,
We twa hae dauner't mony ways,
An' thriven gylies on oor *Lays*,

That ne'er did fail
 To bring us biel, an' duds o' claes,
 An' sowps o' kail.

Ay, auld Sanct Mungo, to his cost,
 Kens how we twa stuck to oor post,
 An' that ilk mornin' 'twas oor boast,
 'Tween nine and ten,
 How mony door bells we'd accost
 I' the Wast En.'

An' yet, my guid auld trusty hat,
 Thou aiblins had ae wee bit faut—
 Laith wert thou aye, atweel I wat,
 My croon too lea',
 An' while's a patron's scowl for that
 Would licht on me.

Steeve as a cooper's steevest gir,
 Thou to my head stuck like a bir,
 Na, whiles the talismanic *Sir*
 Fail'd thee to steer,
 Or if thou frae thy post wad stir
 'Twas a' that e'er.

An' yet, auld frien, thou acted richt,
 To shade my weak een frae the licht,
 Aye sairly dazzled wi' the bricht
 Warm beams o' day,
 An', howlet like, prefer the nicht,
 Or gloamin' grey.

Thou prov'd thy fealty to me,
Yon winter nicht, an' scorn'd to flee,
When strove I wi' gas-light to see
 The mornin's paper,
An' brunt thy croon to save my ee,
 × My leal auld scraper.

A pension then thou doubtless oucht
To hae receiv'd, but I had nocht,
Tho' oor guidewife fu' kindly focht
 Thy croon to clout,
Syne we for weeks thegither wrocht,
 An' gaed about.

But like a nag gane wi' the batts,
Fit only for the chemist's vats,
Thou ne'er again 'mang gaucy hats
 Could tak' thy place,
While pawky weans, ill-manner'd brats,
 Leuch in thy face.

Folk sune, methocht, began to say—
“ Save us, the bard's gaun down the brae ;
Surely that cursed usquebae
 Hisna entangl't
The wretch again ; but gif 'tis sae,
 He should be strangl't.”

Sae be't, an' 'twere owre guid a death ;
But, hat in haun, I'se tak' my aith,
That fire-brain'd whisky we hae baith

Lang passed in scorn,
For we hae learnt to dree the scaith
O' that bill's horn.

An' Gude be praised ! a kindly chiel,
That lang has kent us baith fu' weel,
Has pension'd aff my servant leal,
At his ain cost,
An' placed a new ane in the fiel',
To fill the post.

An' sic a' ane ! I'se wad a croon
Its marrow's no in a' the toun ;
Ribbon'd, an' neither grey nor broun,
But black's the craw,
An' lined wi' silk a' roun' an' roun',
As white's the snaw.

Wi' sic a hat upon my pate,
My certies ! but he'll no be blate,
'Twill for ae moment hesitate
To gae his name
For my new beuk, nor sall he wait
Lang for the same.

Meanwhile, auld hat, a kind adieu,
An' hail, thrice hail, new hat to you ;
Fair fa' the generous heart an' true
I gat ye frae—
Him gratitude keeps still in view,
By nicht and day.

My benison, sic like's it is,
 May't richly fa' on him an' his;
 An' ne'er may poortith's ugsome phiz
 Darken his door,
 But Plenty's bees still thither bizz
 Wi' hinny store.

Het faced confusion to the foes,
 That sneakishly wad round him close;
 Gie him ilk rascal by the nose,
 Nor may he want
 A rowth o' smeddum to expose
 A' sorts o' cant.

God frae a' ill spare an' defend
 This puir man's councillor an' friend;
 To him an' his o' joy here send
 A rich repast;
 An' when they reach life's journey's end,
 Gain heaven at last.

THAE SCHULE WEANS.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

Bless me, guidwife, that awsome din,
 That wild tig-towin' out an' in,
 'Bout closes, lobbies, toom coal cellars,
 Disturbin' peacefu' tenant dwellers.

That jumpin', caperin' and crawin' ;
That ruggin', rivin', an' huzzain' ;
That rattlin' up an' down the lane ;
That keekin' thro' our winnock pane ;
That daudin', kickin at the door ;
In short, that boist'rous uproar
Thae schule weans mak' from morn to nicht,
Wad five score Muses put to flicht,
An' tho' it is a vexin' spite,
I maun gie't owre—I canna write.

See, there's a sorrow o' a callan',
(Fair fa' his breedin' and his schulin' ;)
Our close-drawn screen he canna thole,
An' maks to mount the winnock sole,
As we'd some uncas to be seen,
On whilk to feast his greedy e'en ;
Rin, rin guidwife, his progress check,
Or down he'll come an' break his neck,
An' aiblins fix anither dart
In some puir mither's bleedin' heart,
Wha strives, 'mid pinchin' want and dule,
To keep her laddie at the schule ;
But stop—the roguie's aff like stour,
He saw ye makin' for the door,
An' tho' ye'd threaten him wi' a fung,
He'd lauch, an' shoot ye out his tongue.

Observe that ill-set cuttie there,
She's ruggin' at a schulemate's hair ;
There goes the bloomer aff her heid ;
An' there her daidlie, wi' a screid ;

An'—shame on thae destructfu' nieves,
 She's torn the spell-book into leaves.
 An' see this mitherly auld wife,
 Has interfered to redd the strife;
 But frae the victor gets sma thanks—
 My word she can lay down her shanks:
 In terror o' a paiket skin,
 She's at the lanehead swift's the win',
 While to the auld wife's—"Hoo ye durst
 Abuse the wean?"—"She struck me first,"
 The randie cries, syne turns her view
 To mingle i' some mischief new,
 As if she'd never a' her days
 Rugged hair, or torn a neibor's claes.

See this wee birkie wi' the clugs,
 Ane o' the steerinest o' dugs,
 An' greatly does his heart rejoice
 To hear his feet mak sic a noise;
 Nor o'er his head ae minute crosses,
 But what he's rattlin' thro' thae closes.
 The patient mither, at her breast
 Has croon't her nurslin' into rest,
 An' slips it cannily in bed,
 While to her household cares she's sped,
 Hopefu' her burdie soun' may lie,
 Till a' her turns she's gotten by;
 For tho' as kind as kind can be,
 Her ain guidman delights to see
 A' things redd up fu' snod an' clean,
 Within his castle wa's at e'en;

Yet, aiblins, like the feck o' men,
Presidin' at their ain fire en',
It rarely o'er his mind has cross'd
What toil his fire en' comforts cost.
The mither, wi' a bairn no gaun,
An' nane to tak it aff her han',
When by sweeps cluggie like a dart,
The bairnie waukens in a start,
An' as she threatens clugs wi' harm,
Her bantlin's crawin' in her arm,
An' household cares may sink or swim,
They're in abeyance noo to him,
Whase bonnie een wi' pleasure dance,
To see thae schule weans frisk an' prance,
While mithers grumble at the din,
That keeps their wark sae far behin',
An' wish the schule at Tintock tap,
Yet wish the schule weans nae mishap.

But bless us a'! what's noo asteer?
They're like a herd o' hunted deer,
Aff helter-skelter doun the lane,
An' ilk han' firmly grips a stane;
I'se wad a groat, they're aff to meet
The scholars o' the neibor street;
And 'tween their academic cocks
An' ours, there will be bluidy knocks;
Ay, lumpet croons and bluidy noses,
There will be ere the conflict closes.
Let's oot and see hoo gangs the fray;
But haud—first clap our shutter tae,

For broken panes I hate to see,
An' lairds wad rather tak than gie.
Ay, noo they're at it micht an' main,
They charge, retire, an' charge again :
Weel dune the lane! ye'll win the day;—
Na, faith, the street keeps ye at bay.¹
They form a strong defiant square ;
Their balls are whistlin' thro' the air ;
A general here maun leave his post,
A captain there, a teeth has lost,
While vet'rans tried an' raw recruits
Hae cracket pates an' gory snoots.
Here goes a lozen, there a lamp,
But that their courage disna damp ;
As 'twere for Britain's croon they foucht,
They struggle on an' care for noucht.
For gudesake, wife, keep in, keep in,
That bullet by yer nose played spin,
An' length o' nose ye've nane to spare,
Sae o' that organ hae a care,
Or ye may never tune it mair.
But here come twa blue-coated pegs,*
The armies baith tak' to their legs,
And into ilka hole an' bore,
They rin for hidance by the score,
An' sweet peace blesses us once more.

* Policemen.

REFLECTIONS ON "THAE SCHULE
WEANS."

My word ! schule-maisters noo-a-days,
Get aftentimes a deal o' praise
Frae chiels wha think nocht can compare
Wi' new modes o' impartin' lear,
That hourly on our age is gaining,
An' kent, forsooth, as "Moral Training."
An' yet I fearlessly avoo
That teachers hae brow times o't noo,
Gif ane I ken, whase name we'll pass,
Be a fair sample o' the class ;
Exceptin' twa hours i' the day,
Frae ten to twall, I'm bauld to say,
Ten minutes ne'er hae cam' an' gane
But sees his scholars i' the lane ;
An' sic a fleesom din still makin',
Hech, but it's really maist distrackin'.

This system I remember weel,
When tremblin' I essayed to spiel
The frownin', rugged steeps o' lear,
Was scorned an' lauch't at ilkawhere,
An' critics young and savans gray
A' prophesied 'twad never dae.
" 'Twill never dae," quo they, " ye'll find
When we should store the openin' mind
Wi' usefu' sterlin' information,
An' mak' them credits o' the nation,

To train their shootin' thochts to study
 Hoo best to knitten up the body.
 'Tis shamefu' that noo may be seen
 A swankie fallow o' saxteen
 Lamp lampin' roun' a muckle post
 Till i' the air his heels are toss'd
 As he grups hard a knotted rape,
 Whilk gars the bairns wi' wunner gape,
 While a' the silly gom'ral ettled
 Was jist to keep his mūscles fettled,
 When Lindley Murray, Gray, or Cæsar
 Employin' should hae been his leisure.
 An' then to see the younger folks
 Rin hoops, kick ba's, throw shuttlecocks,
 Build ithers roun' wi' mimic bricks,
 An' mony ither foolish tricks,
 When they should learn a reading task,
 Or write or cipher at the dask,—
 'Tis dounricht nonsense a' thegither
 An' canna thrive, nor ocht it either.
 Na, na; ply bairns wi' sterner stuff:
 They'll learn to trifle soon enough!"

But facts wi' fancies disagree;
 We this new trainin' system see
 Our auld schule notions far surpasses,
 An' turns oot clever lads and lasses—
 The fair to grace the female station;
 The chiels to fill wi' approbation
 At times high places i' the nation.

Witness auld Albion's stout Premier
 (Wha, an' he's spared, will soon be here*
 To mount yon throne 'mid loud huzzas,
 Within our ancient college wa's).
 An' yet that fourscore cock o' pluck,
 'Fore whase name dynasties hae shuck,
 E'en he thinks nae shame o' the masses,
 The horny-fisted workin' classes—
 Sic chieels as ane sees noo-a-days
 Pick up their schulin' wi' their plays;—
 But soon we'll see him grace their board,†
 Great Britain's great First Treasury Lord.
 In my young days things werena sae —
 Nor is my pow yet bauld or gray.
 Lords then were unca thinly sawn
 T'wad taen a warkman by the han',
 An' as for sharin' o' their board
 As daily noo we see some lord,
 They'd jist as sune sit down an' dine
 Amang a drove o' gruntin swine;
 Still haughtily aloof they stood
 Far frae "the unwashed multitude."

Noo this is richt; I like too see't;
 An' pray that the angelic feet

* Referring to Lord Palmerston's promised visit to Glasgow, on Tuesday the 31st March, 1863, for the purpose of delivering his inaugural address as Lord Rector of the University.

† Public soiree held by the working classes in honour of his Lordship, in the City Hall, Glasgow, on the 1st April, 1863.

O' Education sune may bring
 Thae days sung by our Poet King,
 "When man to man shall brithers be,
 The world o'er." Yet bide a wee;
 That disna say thae wild schule weans
 Should crowdie mak' o' my puir brains,
 Whilk aft I fin', though unmolested,
 To ser' my turn are hardly-tested,
 By sic a fleesom din an' skirlin'
 Till pain alang my noddle's dirlin'.
 Nor does it say their dominies
 Shouldna dae something for their fees,
 An' strive to teach them better breedin',
 Than when a certain poet's readin'
 Some usefu' page o' rhyme or prose
 Aff his bit beuk close to his nose,
 They in his lugs their noise should vent it,
 Till whiles the bardie's half demented.

Ah bairns! Ah bairns! ye gar me sigh,
 And aften turn a yearnin' eye
 To yonder quiet rural shade,
 Whaur i' my holidays I've stray'd,
 Or lain, as wayward fancy led,
 Upon the velvet sward an' read
 Wi' zest the live-thocht pregnant page,
 O' some historian, bard, or sage;
 Or listened to the murmurs sweet
 O' the wee brooklet at my feet,
 An' watched the trout wi' silvery gleam,
 Dart sportive thro' the lucid stream;

Or joyous roved the woods amang,
An' tuned my Doric harp in sang,
While auld dame Nature's feath'ry choir,
Lent still fresh vigour to my lyre.
Ah, then, hoo earnestly I'd pray,
That I micht linger there for aye,
Far frae the turmoil an' the strife
Attendant on a city life—
Its jostlin' streets, its gloomy lanes,
An' far frae you, ye wild schule-weans.
An' yet, puir things, I dinna ken
But that within my sylvan den
I'd hae vexations even there—
As weel as here at times to bear.
The stillest shades are whiles o'er-cast
By the oak-levelling, roaring blast ;
The lettered page, 'mid rural ease,
E'en there at a' times canna please ;
The warblins o' the brooklet clear
Fa' harshly whiles upon the ear ;
The woods o' music whiles are mute,
An' sae, I fear, micht be my lute,
Though on its cadence ne'er micht jar
Contendin' schule-weans' whoop o' war.
Sae rant awa, enjoy yer sport ;
Laith wad I be to cut it short ;
I ance was at the schule mysel',
An' wi' a' mischief loved to mell :
An' howe'er lustily ye craw
I'se scribble on amang it a',
Sin' aiblins e'en in rural lanes
I'd fin' that schule-weans are but weans.

THE LAIRD—A SKETCH OF CHARACTER.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.—THE LAIRD'S PORTRAIT.

LET truth and prudence guide the pen,
While frae live mem'ry's searching ken
An artless muse to sketch has dared
Her full-length portrait o' the Laird.

Tho' towmonts twal the fate hae shar'd
O' things create, sin' last the Laird
I saw aneath my daddie's biel,
O' him I yet remember weel,
An' without muckle strain or fyke
Can brawly tell what he was like.
Ay, tho' hae fled noo towmonts twa
Sin' frae this warl he slipp'd awa,
Sma' pains 'twill gie my Doric verse
His looks an' manners to rehearse.

In stature 'bout the middle hicht,
As roun's a puncheon, an' as ticht,
When 'tis dispatch'd into the city
Bung fu' o' precious aqua vitæ;
(Suppose for ance—noo this nae sport is—
We term the liquid "aqua mortis,")
An' yet, nae rustic in his gait,
Bearin' genteel, an' step elate,
He strode thro' life wi' jaunty air,
Scant, ane wad think, o' noucht but care.

•

Some saxty winters' stormy shocks
Had thinn'd an' tinged wi' grey his locks ;
The share o' Time's relentless plew
Had deeply furrow'd up his broo.
An' yet that broo erect was borne,
As if the sun o' life's young morn
Poured on it, in transcendant blaze,
A flood o' joy-inspiring rays,
The while his auld grey een outvie
In ardour wi' youth's gleigest eye.

The heat o' saxty summers roun'
Had swarth'd his cheeks, yet spared a croon
O' rosy hue, to show the wealth
Its wearer own'd o' sturdy health.
But O! thae cheeks o' flesh were thin
An' whiskerless, beardless that chin;
An' yet, I kenna hoo it grew,
Save to befule a doun-curv'd mou,
That chin a lauchin' dimple show'd,
As if guid-nature there abode.

But 'twas a libel on the man—
A crosser sinner never ran
His destined course 'tween life and death,
Nor caused as he sae muckle scaith
To his puir fellow-tenant worms,
Wi' dounricht, furious passion-storms.
Na, na! guid-nature weel nicht leuk
Till tired, nor fin' a genial neuk
Within his Lairdship's warly saul,
Whaur a' was selfish, stern, an' caul'.

In his attire, we maun confess,
 The Laird was nae way nice in dress ;
 An auld bare hat, nor black nor broun,
 Crack-brim'd, stuck aye upon his croon ;
 Ony auld dudg[e] o' a coat,
 That scarce for rags wad brocht a groat ;
 A waistcoat flush o' thread-bare gaws,
 The button-holes o't heads an' thrāws ;
 Breeks that auld Noah micht hae worn,
 And sic like ser't his Lairdship's turn.
 Nae beggar-man wad gien a plack
 For a' the cleadin' on his back ;
 An' yet in contrast wondrous queer
 To the auld duddies he did wear,
 A bunch o' seals as big's my nieve
 Wagg't owre his muckle wame sae steeve,
 While in his pouch still was the jingle^t
 O' siller pieces heard to tingle ;
 But ne'er a coin o' them cam' forth,
 Save to procure twice owre its worth.

In household chattels, ne'er a lord
 Could richer plenishin' afford,
 An' few produce a choicer store
 O' beuks, an' paintin's quaint an' hoar ;
 An' fewer still the Laird surpassed
 In ignorance o' wealth sae class'd
 An' while 'twas said he lo'ed to see
 'Bout him his gaudy family,
 Save to respond to kirk-gaun bell,
 He like a beggar dressed himsel'.

E'en then, as gossips oft hae sworn,
 For twenty years ae suit he'd worn,
 Yet fond to catch the public view
 He rented a five guinea pew.
 He ne'er gaed stealin' by the plate,
 As puir folk whiles maun dae, tho' blate,
 But still his shilling or his croon, ~~+~~
 Wi' noisy swagger clinked down,
 While orphans at his door might starve,
 Nor stir in him ae tender nerve.

A character in short, the Laird,
 As self his ilka action squar'd,
 To dae a guid turn ne'er was kent,
 Save whaur 'twad bring him cent per cent
 In sterling cash ; or, prood o' state,
 Some sma' distinction frae the great,
 In proof o' whilk, dead tho' he be,
 He'll tell owre his ain history ;
 Sin' poet's wan' can sune restore
 To life the dead o' ages hoar.

PART II.—THE LAIRD'S HISTORY.

“ He that has juist enouch can soun'ly sleep ;
 The owrecome only fashes folk to keep.”

RAMSAY.

LEST sceptics think we stories tell,
 We'll let the Laird speak for himsel'.

"Anither day has owre us sped,
 The guidwife and the bairns in bed,
 An' a'things dune as was desired ;
 An' eke the servants hae retir'd
 An' handed in the back-door key,
 The whilk I guard wi' jealous e'e ;
 For, though I rarely interpose
 Between the lasses and their joes,
 Sae lang's wi' decent chiels they're seen,
 An' keep to elders' hours at e'en,
 I somehoo couldna' sounly sleep,
 Unless that key was i' my keep :
 An' few wise men o' means ye'll find
 But what are something o' my mind.

"Shoo, shooin' i' my rockin' chair,
 Noo for an hour's relief frae care,
 Noo for a pleasurable len
 O' memory's far reachin' ken,
 While musin' by my parlour fire,
 Wi' a' the comforts I desire.

"I see the cot whaur I was born,
 The green an' muckle-gnarled thorn,
 Whaur I hae aften played the fule,
 When, aiblins, I should been at schule.
 I see the auld schule-house itsel',
 Doun by the wimplin' mossy well,
 Whaur i' the thochtless days o' youth
 I aft hae slak'd my burnin' drouth.
 I see the maister at his dask ;
 Again I blunder through my task :

Again that roller crunts my croon ;
Again I hear, ' Go, sir, sit down,
Ye silly, dounricht dunderhead ;
At nocht will ye ere win yer bread.'
I see this man o' wondrous lore
Come beggin' to that pupil's door.
E'en yet I chuckle at the heart
Wi' joy to see that dolt impart
An awmus to the wretched wicht
That styl'd him dunderhead dounricht.

" I see the schulemates at their play,
Wha ca'd me ' dultie doun the brae,'
' Slack drone' i' their scholastic byke,
' Vile mooly penny,' an' sic like,
When I'd, forsooth, my coppers heap,
While ilka bawbee i' their keep
Aye gaed in snashtries for their wames,
Or prints to decorate their hames.
I've leev'd to see some o' them sink
In foul debauchery an' drink :
An' ithers that are to the fore,
Can scarce haud famine frae their door ;
While fat abundance loads the board
O' him wham they hae aft ignored.

" I see the shop, the loom, the seat,
Whaur lang I 'shuttl'd air and late,
Strugglin' to weave wi' tenty care
The web o' independence fair ;
An' thanks be to the pairt I played,

A healthy frame, an' prudent head,
A gaucy wab o't I hae made,
Unaided by the lear o' schules,
Whase sages whiles are warly fules.
An' yet I, wi a faucht 'tis true,
Managed to spell my letters through ;
Could read my Bible no that ill,
And, at a pinch, endorse a bill,
An' though 'a dounricht dunderhead,'
Could count as muckle's ser't my need.
Yet thae drawbacks, gif sic they were,
Ne'er clog'd the wheels o' fortune's car,
But on they smoothly ran wi' glee,
An' tap't the hill prosperity.

" But things are altered noo-a-days ;
Book-lear's the level that maun raise
The young aspirant frae the mire
To whate'er post he may desire,
An' carters, porters, masons' men,
Maun be weel versed in beuk and pen,
Or they will suffer i' the en'.
There's my ain bairns—the ne'er a morn
But what I'm maist asunder torn.
John want's a lexicon or grammar,
An' James a geologic hammer
To ope the hearts o' chuckie stanes
An' see what bluid rins i' their veins ;
Jeanie's schule-fees again are due ;
Maggie's piano, a' but new,
Has tint a key, a pin, or screw.

In truth, sic everlasting drain
 Upon the purse, aft gars me grane,
 An' wish me on the loom again.
 But wi' ilk comfort to assuage
 The tottering frailties o' auld age,
 That sune 'ill hae me i' their keep,
 I'se in aneth the blankets creep,
 An' strive in that care-soothin' spot
 To be contented wi' my lot."

PART III.—THE LAIRD ABROAD.

"Puir tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 Hoo they maun thole a factor's snash."

BURNS.

Ay, Robin, i' thy days I ween,
 Lairds an' their factors were as keen
 As new-honed razor on the chin,
 Their rents frae cottar folks to skin;
 An' 'tisna wrangin' truth to say,
 They shave as clean in oor ain day.
 But *Cæsar's* wail owre "factor's snash,"
 Was made for them 'twere "scant o' cash,"
 Yet rowth o' wull to pay their rent,
 Whereas oor laird, it should be kent,
 Wi' swinlin' tenants had to dale,
 (Least, 'tis wi' them that lies oor tale,)
 'Mang wham it seem't to be the hale
 Life's aim hoo best they nicht defraud
 Him oot the payments o' his haud.

This muckle for the Laird we voo,
Sin' e'en "Auld Nick" deserves his due.

Frae's castle at oor toun's wast en',
Sune as his lobby nock strikes ten,
The whilk to vaury ne'er was kent,
Ilk morn, to gather in his rent,
Staps forth the Laird; for sic a crew
O' tenants has he, auld an' new,
That ilka day some rent fa's due.
Then see him wi' his specks astride
His cockit neb, fu' briskly glide,
Ledger in han'—he keeps nae clark—
To face anither forenoon's wark
'Mang courts, an' wynds, an' closes dark,
Richt proud the while, he there can claim
What gies him *Esquire* to his name.
Few sican rickly, tum'ledoun
Auld biggins showed Saint Mungo's toun,
As were oor lairdie's in his day;
An' yet the bodie gart them pay:
Ay, rugget oot them cent per cent,
For his outlay in shape o' rent,
Frae sic as led immoral lives—
Loose unwed sluts, an' faithless wives,
Thieves, bullies fierce as alligators,
To seize toun sailin' navigators,
Driftin' mad folly's gale before,
Prow on, to ruin's rocky shore.

We may be sure that sic a set
Defied whiles e'en oor Laird to get

What, in his greed, he ca'd his due,
 Frae oot his rank pestiferous stew.
 Ay, mony a collieshangie there
 The Laird has raised to grab his share
 O' Prostitution's gains unhaly,
 While forth her votaries black wad sally,
 An' tangs, an' poker, eke a spurtle,
 Sune thro' the air were seen to hurtle,
 Whilk lent his Lairdship bluidy clures;
 Or bricks fell thick as hailstane shoors,
 When wild Boreas toots his horn
 Upon a surly winter's morn;
 Till, what wi' this, an' cries obscene,
 Big aiths satanic mix'd between,
 Vanquished, the Laird wad flee the scene.
 But aftner 'mang sic rowdie core
 His Lairdship gat a lockit door,
 At whilk he thun'er might in vain—
 For him admittance there was nane,
 E'en tho' he cam to seek his ain.
 Then cronies wad on aith declare,
 "She's no'twa minutes down the stair,"
 When, an the honest truth were said,
 The slut is lying fou in bed;
 Or, as she o' his comin' kent,
 In nick o' time abroad she's went,
 An' he may whustle for his rent.
 Aiblins niest day he entrance gains,
 But place o' rent, get sichts an' granes—
 "Fortune ne'er shoor'd sae mony waes
 On his puir tenant a' her days;"

Or, warst to bide, he's fiercely stung
By the vile randy's venom'd tongue.
Nor need he threaten process legal,
She owns na what wad pay a beagle,
Sae he maun patiently wait on,
Or turn his tenant to the lone,
Whilk here need scarcely be declared,
Gies sma' compunction to the Laird.

No but that patience he had gat,
As witness when on guard he sat
For hours, ae scourie winter nicht,
Upon a stance a story's hicht,
When tenants meant to tak their flicht,
Wha sax months' rent were i' his debt,
But ne'er a bawbee could he get.
At length he on his eyrie sitting
Espies the rogues begin their flittin',
An' noo on grun' maun hae a fittin'—
When lo! they've aff the lether ta'en,
By whilk he'd to his eyrie gane.
They're aff! yet, och! he canna follow,
But, like a mad bull, roar an' bellow—
Or grumphia, when the butcher's knife,
Is nicking its sma' thread o' life.

Nae doot, 'neath sican tricks to smart,
Helpit to petrify his heart
'Gainst honest poortith's trials sad—
An' whiles the Laird sic tenants had:
A wife an' mither lang forsaken
By her "liege lord." Death had o'ertaken

Her chief support, her only callan,
 That aye to gie her help was willin';
 An' tho' she awed the Laird some rent,
 Her hinmost bawbee she had spent
 On her son's coffin, that niest day
 Wad see committed to the clay.
 But ere the nicht awa' had sped,
 Whase morn wad pairt her frae her dead,
 In cam the Laird, arm'd wi' the law,
 An' for his rent-dues pin'd her a', *spun.*
 Swearing she had nae richt to spen'
 On coffins what was no her ain;
 Syne, 'mid a riotous uproar,
 Turn'd her an' coffin to the door.

An ugly story—yet 'tis true,
 An' a fair sample o' a few
 That Mem'ry's stores hae lang receiv'd,
 O' whilk she'd fain noo be relievd.
 But 'tis eneuch, the Laird is gane,
 Nor o' his hooses did ae stane
 O' them ere to his heirs pertain.
 Ae luckless throw o' Fortune's dice,
 An' a' was swallowed in a trice
 On the outburst o' ae gran' bubble,
 By whilk the Laird ance thocht to double
 His darlin' gowd; but Fate wad thraw,
 Said no, an' he maun yield his a';
 An' sae, like mony a better man's,
 His avaricious schemes an' plans

For warldly gude were thwarted clean,
An' vanished as they ne'er had been :
Nor can the mem'ry o' his fame
Wake up a sympathetic flame
Within the vera humblest hame.

THE FLITTIN' DAY:

A CITY SKETCH DRAWN FROM REAL LIFE.

PART I.

O THOU grim Twenty-aucht o' May,
Thou tapsal-teerie flittin' day,
I've lang a rhyme been i' thy debt,
An' noo thou'lt ample payment get,
Sin' I'm resolved, let come what will,
In this auld biggin' to sit still.
No but this dungeon o' a dwallin'
(This an ye like the laird be tellin',
For I'm no in his debt a shillin')
I'd blythly lea', if some kind fairy
Wad me an' a' my household carry
(Nor wad its backie, poet's word on,
Be sairly rackit wi' the burden),
An' clap us doun juist onywhere
Whaur we micht breathe the caller air,
An' no be kilt wi' thae vile gases
We're breathin' here ilk hour that passes.

But O, to flit I'm fleesom lazy,
 The vera thoct o't sets me crazy;
 Though by-an'-by, an' that ere lang,
 I'm dootfu' I'll be forced to gang.

A promise may pit aff a laird
 When wi' his rent ane's no prepared,
 Though thae side-looks, I muckle fear,
 Are notes a-takin' o' yer gear;
 But thou, snell flittin' day tom'st on,
 An' frae thy scaith escape there's none—
 To a' aneath thy iron han'
 The warrant's serv'd, an' flit they maun.
 Thou foe to order, peace, an' quiet,
 Thou cap-stane o' domestic riot,
 Thou dread o' a' save wutless weans,
 Thou jumbler o' the bardie's brains—
 That benefactor o' his times!—
 Hech sirs, what havoc 'mang his rhymes
 Thy presence works! hoo mony a gem,
 Weel hained to grace the diadem
 O' his imperishable fame,
 Thou'st gien to cauld oblivion's wame;
 Or, in plain prose, aft hast thou hidden
 'Mang worthless rubbish i' the midden
 His priceless diamond-written pages—
 Great loss to him—an' future ages!

Ance mair I snuff thee on the breeze,
 Ance mair dark mem'ries on me seize,
 As vainly paper, ink, an' pen
 I socht i' my ance sacred den.

An' though, be thankit, I'm meanwhile
Safe frae thy stoorie, mad turmoil,
Still, poet's heart can feel for ithers,
An' sae I sing o' hapless brithers
That fiercely noo as hunted tigers,
Are snarlin' 'neath thy smartin' rigours.

As murky clouds blue skies obscure
Ere prone descends the peltin' shower ;
As through the woods faint gusts hae passed
Ere sweeps the wild oak-levelling blast ;
As couchant lion's tail up-sweeps
Ere he upon his victim leaps ;
As whitening locks full sure presage
The coming frailties o' auld age ;
Sae tell-tale signs, in black array,
Herald thy advent, Flittin'-Day !

Wives that gang oot to scrub an' clean
Hae gatten unca proud, I ween,
An' dear as proud, for wad ye please,
Ilk madam noo has raised her fees,
An' for her service ye maun pay,
Foreby her keep, half-crown a-day.
Noo paint-shop winnocks hae on view
Ilk colour o' the rainbow hue ;
Glue, whitening, size, an' mony an ause
To scour yer brasses, paint yer wa's ;
An' to accommodate the poor,
Brushes to len' oot by the hour.
Ironmongers noo are advertisin',
At prices wonerfu' surprisin',

Their parlour grates an' kitchen ranges ;
 But gang to see them, and it strange is
 Gif ye'll no class them without swither
 A set o' intacks a' thegither.
 The wives o' puir yet honest men,
 Set noo upon a butt an' ben,
 Dress'd oot fu' snod, an' string in han's
 Are huntin' through the brokers' stan's,
 Thrang measurin' queer auld farrant grates,
 Sae auld 'twere hard to tell their dates;
 They seem the first 'twere cuisten when
 "Sage Darwin's muckle fish grew men."
 Sic out-door auguries as thae
 Tell o' thy coming, Flittin'-Day !

O' favours 'tis the flower o' a',
 When bodies hae been warned awa',
 To get their house a week or sae
 Afore the weary flittin'-day ;
 Nor hae their chattels an' themsel'
 Upon the roarin' street to dwell
 Till the twalt hour has struck the bell.
 Whaur Fortune has this favour gien,
 The tired guidman comes hame at e'en,
 An' scarce has gat his supper ta'en
 When he maun to the toil again.
 The new house grate himsel' maun big it,
 For masons winna noo be priggitt
 Doun i' their price, e'en prentice callans
 To dae the job charge twarrie shillin's.
 (Noo builders, guard yer lime an' bricks,
 For flittin' folks are fu' o' tricks ;

Although the rogues, for ocht I ken,
May turn oot some o' yer ain men;
Sin', or else gossips stories tell,
They're nae ways laith to help themsel'.)
The aucht-day nock, gif ane there be,
Has to be ta'en doun cannilie,
An' wife an' bairnies ken fu' well
Nane daur touch nockie but himsel';
That tent-bed bottom wants a deal in;
This table creaks to get a nail in:
Noo hies he aff to Micky Sparrow,
His coalman, for a hurley barrow,
To get their heavy things transported
To their new house, while he's escorted
By younkers Anra, Jock, an' Ann,
Wi' kettle, pat, an' fryin'-pan,
By mither's han' a' scrapit tichtly,
An' burnished wi black-lead fu' brichtly,
While tables, buffet-stuils, an' chairs
Hae shared alike her cleanin' cares,
O' whilk they've no gat sic a feast
Sin' the last flittin'-day at least.

Sae it repays a body's pains,
When cleanliness thus reaps the gains
(Whilk niest to godliness pertains),
To hae a flittin' noo an' then;
Na, some pernickity guidmen,
Wha lo'e this virtue i' their heart,
Hae the assurance to assert
That some guidwives they weel could name,
To cherish cleanliness at hame,

Should hae a flittin' ilka ouk,
 Syne things wad a' the better look.
 Then drawers, dresser, jugs, an' cans,
 An' gobblets, girdles, toasters, pans,
 Noo jaundice-visaged a' the year,
 Wad sune hae looks o' halesome cheer;
 Else she maun be a tasteless haur
 'Twad face the gleg e'e o' the warl',
 An' cause gie to its bitter gab
 To curse her for a hanless drab.

Noo wives, an' this vile charge be fause,
 Yer brawly fit to plead yer cause,
 An' to the libel gie the lie;
 For me I've ither fish to fry
 Than start a learned, lang palayer
 Either against or i' yer favour.
 I've gat to wag baith pen an' tongue
 (Its shadows only hae been sung)
 In bardic fashion to pourtray
 The turmoil o' a flittin'-day;
 An' may the helicon clear spring
 Keep saft my thrapple when I sing.

PART II.

HERALD Chanticleer has scarcely blawn
 His horn, to usher in the dawn
 O' this same Twenty-aucht o' May,
 This hurly-burly flittin' day,

When some few bodies, to improve
 Their social fittin', dae remove
 A' that belongs to them on earth,
 To plant anew their family hearth
 Nearer the mark at whilk they aim
 (An' aimless life's a life o' shame)
 Wi' zeal, in hopes to hit the same
 Some day, while yet auld age is green,
 An' they "their bairnies' bairns hae seen."
 While ithers, an' they are na scant,
 Wha've gat a sudden wild carrant
 (We bide na here to speer the cause—
 Prosperity meets mony fa's)
 Frae tap to fit o' fortune's braise,
 Ere comes the waefu' flittin'-day,
 Ca' in the glib-tongued auctioneer
 To sell the best feck o' their gear,
 An' wi' the residue, puir things,
 Ere yet the early lav'rock sings,
 They sadly seek some distant plain,
 To face that sliddery braise again,
 Frae whilk they erst cam' down like shot;
 Or, aiblins in a lowly cot,
 Undaunted yet they nobly strive
 Their cozie auld biel to retrieve;
 An' tho' the "creature of a day,"
 It's wonerfu' what man can dae
 Gif heaven and will but point the way.
 An' there's a third squad that we see,
 Wha ne'er let weel-eneuch abee,
 But pilgrims like, aye on the steer,
 Hae whiles sax flittin's ilka year—

Ay, whiles a dizen; tho', be't kent,
 They're feckly fleein' frae the rent;
 An' (ask their landlords an' ye doot it)
 They're neither lag nor lame about it—
 A cuddie cart or porter's hurly
 Sune whups them aff, synè awsome surly,
 The laird's factotum strives in vain
 To ferret out whaur they hae gane.
 But bless us a'! what's noo the steer?
 While we've been staunin' bletherin' here,
 See yonder comes full in oor way
 The hurry o' the flittin'-day.
 Sae, reader, quick, let's get upon
 The Hie Kirk steeple, or the Tron
 (Does't no cow a' hoo Bardies lo'e,
 To nestle 'mang the clouds sae blue),
 Or we'll be traml't i' the thrang,
 That's roarin' noo oor path alang.

O what a sicht—ech! what a soun'—
 Possesses auld Saunt Mungo's toun,
 Frae early morn till gloamin' gray,
 Upon oor yearly flittin'-day.
 Were't possible oor patron Saunt
 Could wi' this steer be made acquaint,
 I'm certain, when he'd see what's gaun on,
 He'd think he stationed was in Lon'on,
 An' no in his bit ancient borough,
 Thro' whilk he could hae waukit thorough
 In less time on his ain twa feet,
 Than noo he'd tak' to coach ae street,

Frae whaur we staun 'twad seem the people
(Mind ye we're on oor Hie Kirk steeple)
Are fairly set upon migration,
Frae this to sunnier location
(Thinkna my figure ye'll trepan, 1-1-1
A' seasons are alike to man,
Wha aft within his narrow time
Has leev'd and thriven in mony a clime),
While frae ilk weary bird o' passage
We draw the never failin' presage
That nocht we'd dae or say wad stay them—
Their nests, their young, their a' gaes wi' them,
While ilk conveyance ye could name
Has been engaged to flit the same.
Come, railway carts, spring vans, and lorries,
Heapt up wha kens hoo mony stories,
Wi' sofas, couches, hair mattresses,
Rugs, feather beds, and napery presses,
Pianos, music stauns, bookcases,
Engravin's, paintin's, maps, an' vases,
Adonises, an' a' the graces ;
Pembrokes, sideboards, and ither tables ;
Carpets coiled up as they were cables ;
Chairs that when pensfu' ye may rock in ;
Spitoons to spit in when ye're smokin' ;
An' muckle mair that's to my ken less,
Whilk to enumerate were en'less ;
Owned by, as ane may brawly see,
The tap boughs o' the social tree,
The while its roots—the toilin' masses
(Thinkna I slicht the upper classes—

Gude bless them a', I'm sure I pray,
 Wi' health an' a dry flittin'-day,)
 On ae-wheel'd or on twa-wheel'd barrows,
 Coal-waggon's whase wheels ne'er were marrows,
 Close carts, or carts wi' open bodies,
 Drawn by auld whazlin' naigs or cuddies,
 Maun flit their twarie sticks and duddies.
 An' sautly noo the bodies pay
 For sic conveyances as thae
 On this 'bune a' days i' the year,
 When horse an' cuddie wark sells dear.
 As witness, wi' a hielan' pony,
 I'm here that's aften won my bonnie
 Thretty white shillins frae sic folk
 Or ere my beast was oot the yoke.
 Puir chiels that canna pay for hacks
 Maun use their ain strong arms an' backs,
 An' 'tis, I trow, a queer conceit
 To see them hoichlin' 'lang the street:
 Caff beds rowed up in sheets like ba's,
 Gaun aye dunt duntin' 'gainst the wa's:
 Lame tables, rickety auld chairs,
 Pats, pans, an' creels o' crockery wares,
 While tap o' a' there sits a-straddle
 The mither's croon—a weel-worn cradle.
 (They wha maun strive wi' poortith grim
 But rarely hae the cradle toom,
 While they that live at heck an' manger
 Sigh vainly for "the little stranger,"
 And aft maun lea' their big estates,
 For lack o' heirs, to vile ingrates.)

But I maun haud—the Muse is hairse,
 An' though her theme half sung is scarce,
 She downa lilt anither verse.
 O that the power was i' my aucht
 To bring her ae guid wally waucht
 Frae auld Castalia's mystic well,
 Syne ye wad hear hoo she could tell
 That still anither "Marathon"
 Taks place, ilk flittin'-day upon,
 'Mang thae voracious insect breed
 That on puir human mortals feed;
 Hoo angry wives ilk ither ban
 When thae hae on the street to stan';
 What bitter vows—"Turn oot ye shall,
 For, lass, ye'll min' its chappit twal';"
 'Mang nursin' weans what awsome yammerin',
 'Mang bearded men what thumpin' hammerin';
 Bairns owre their new-fan playocks boastin'
 That the last flittin'-day were lost on;
 What crackin' jokes, what sair mishanthers
 'Mang crockery, mirrors, an' decanters;
 What thoctless queans wi' chiels gallantin';
 What skirlin', ruggin', reivin', ranjin',
 What fuls keep to the chainge-house slinkin';
 What wild galravishin' an' drinkin'
 At nicht—for though o' reason cheated,
 Their new house surely maun be heated!
 In short, there's still a lengthy spring
 Left to the jaded Muse to sing;
 An' though she here cuts short her screed,
 Let's tak the guid will for the deed,

Thankfu' she's had e'en half her say
Upon oor yearly flittin'-day.

MY NEW LOCATION.

INSCRIBED, WITH THE AUTHOR'S WARMEST REGARDS, TO
JANET HAMILTON, LANGLOAN, AUTHORESS OF "POEMS AND ESSAYS."

O LEESE me on thy numbers, Janet,
While I attempt to croon a sonnet,
In humble bardic imitation
O' thy choice verses—"Our Location."
I needna say, auld cantie leddy—
For this thou brawly ken'st already—
That I hae lately had a flittin';
And though I find my new dounsittin',
In mony ways, a chainge richt joyous,
There's aye a something to annoy us—
And will be; sae we needna quarrel
Wi' what "the way is o' the warl'."
I'm sure, at least, thou winna swither
To hearken while a rhymin' brither,
In ane o' thy ain fav'rite measures,
Tells owre his drawbacks and his pleasures—
What comfort yields, and what vexation,
To him about his new location.
Sae, Janet, dinna say me nay,
And I'se come east some early day,
(In sturdy prose, or poet's strain,
Thou'rt brawly fit to haud thy ain,
An' seek'st, nor needest help frae nane)

And o' enjoyment hae a feed,
To hear thee blaw thy Doric reed.

The whauraboots o' this location
Graced wi' the bardie's habitation,
Is brawly kent to Glasca bodies,
Coal-drawin' naigs, and weary cuddies.
It stauns hard-by the darksome runnel,
Kent as "the Caledonian tunnel,"
Through whilk, wi' bodies, gear, and cattle,
Fiz-fizen locomotives rattle,
Lang after Phœbus, glowin' fallow,
Has owre the wastlan hills shot hallow
'Mid ocean tides to cool and wallow.
In hurry-burry, yet in order,
Big trains frae baith sides o' the border—
'Tween Norlan', Thurso, and Slamannan,
'Tween auld Carlisle and busy Lunnan—
Or gaun or comin' still are birlin',
Wi' deavsome dunnerin' and dirlin',
The while the whistlin' and the skirlin'
Frae oot the roadster's steamy gullet
Rings through ane's lug-drum like a bullet.
Sic sights an' soun's as my auld grannie,
Were she but here, wad thocht uncannie;
And as for railway-coach, to sit in't,
The ne'er o' her wad put a fit in't,
But wi' a gratefu' "Gude be thankit,"
Her ilka gate she'd blythely shank it.

As lordly ha's wi' groves and parks
Are bounded, sae wi' public warks

In busy, smeekey combination,
 Is thickly hedged my new location.
 My front has "Tennant's" muckle stauk,
 Its brither, Townsend's, at my back;
 Coalhills abune, and lower boundaries
 Are potteries, secret warks, and found'ries,
 Glass warks, distilleries, and smiddies,
 Sichts, soun's, and smells, and a' that guid is.

There's rowth o' steer and botheration
 Enow about my new location,
 Though an' a month or twa were roun'
 I dootna things 'ill settle doun:
 A street side o' new houses biggin,
 There's masons hewin', navvies diggin';
 And muckle din there is and clamour
 'Tween wooden mallet, axe, and hammer.
 While to ane's door there's nae approachin'
 For joists and quarry stanes encroachin',
 Till, haith, at gaun I'm sic a bummel,
 I'm fleyt some day I'll get a tumble,
 And break a leg, or kilt be fairly,
 Syne Meg, puir thing, wad miss me sairly.

As for the men 'bout my location,
 Puir chiels, they're o' the toilin' station:
 There's masons, plumbers, joiners, sawers;
 There's moulders, potters, bottle-blowers;
 Wi' railway guards, and engine ca'ers,
 Coal-riddlers, carters, bakers, millers;
 Mechanics, smiths, asphalte-distillers,
 And twarie burly whisky sellers—

Thae lazy drones, whase avocation
 Begets sic scenes o' desolation,
 As ane sees plainly when he passes
 The hive-hames o' the toilin' masses.
 O whan wi'll Common Sense see cause
 (Excuse a parenthetic clause)
 To stop this everlasting drain
 Upon Industry's dearest vein?
 Whan banish to its native hell
 The vampire demon o' the stell? *Stell*

O' wives and weans, but rarely scanty
 'Mang workin' folk, they're here in plenty.
 The weans, puir things, like feck o' ithers,
 Bear strong resemblance to their mithers:
 Some fat, some lean, some scant o' cleedin',
 Some clad, weel-train'd, some scant o' breedin'!
 Some cleanly-keepit, tosh an' cosie,
 Some i' the gutters lank an' lousy,
 Some cuddlin' i' their mithers' bosie.
 Some mithers here grace wedded lives,
 Some mithers are, yet arena wives;
 Some decent, thrifty wives that wud be,
 Ithers nae better than they should be—
 Tho' sic are rife, an' mair's the pity,
 In kintra village, toun, an' city.
 Some plainly dress'd, some gaudy queans,
 Wha glory in their crinolines;
 Some real carefu', sober wives,
 Some blasters o' their partners' lives,
 Or at their door-cheeks idle stanin',
 Or wi' their cronies boozin', pawnin'.

Sic, Janet, is the new location
Whaur I hae pitch'd my habitation,
Whilk thoul't be judgin', frae my letter,
Is than my auld ane little better—
Na, waur in this—its higher rented ;
Yet, wi' the change I'm weel contented,
Sin' I can see, the ben-most neuk in't,
To scrawl a line or read a beuk in't,
Whilk to a bard, as times are pressin',
Thoul't own, I'm sure, maun be a blessin'.
But, auld Queen Sangstress o' Langloan
(I micht hae said o' Caledon ;
At least nae live Scotch poet's line
Stirs my untutor'd heart like thine),
Lest I thy raxin' patience tire,
I'se noo unstring my rugged lyre,
An' pray Heaven's favours, rare an' monie,
Bless thee an' thy "Auld neebor Johnnie,"
Thy fifty towmonts bosom cronie.

THE POET TO THE FLY,
ON A CHILL NOVEMBER NIGHT.

THOU hamely, solitary Flee,
Thir twarie nichts I've notic'd thee,
When Meg and I sit down to tea
Wi' healthy zeal,
Light on oor table in great glee,
Wi' joyous wheel.

I ken fu' brawly what ye want,
An' though to chiel that lives on rant

The fare at times is geyan scant,
E'en dab awa,
Aiblins on this same Doric chant
I'll credit draw.

Ay, ay, thou'rt welcome to a crumb,
Whene'er thou feel'st inclined to come,
For I'd be unca laith to drum
Thee frae my biel,
Sin' for thy pick thy cheery hum
Repays me weel.

But ne'er invade the sugar bowl,
Or something harsher than a gowl
Thoul't frae our guidwife hae to thole,
Wha laith wad be,
Save for that deed o' deeds maist foul,
To harm a flee.

Thou ae flee o' our humble hame,
Wham winter hath made wondrous tame,
It seems to be thy foremost aim,
Life to enjoy,
Whaur nane else may dispute thy claim,
Or thee annoy.

Biz bizin' roun' the chimla lug,
Thou'rt in thy quarters geyan snug,
Whaur nae bluid-thirsty spider dug
Can at thee get,
To bear thee wi' a savage hug
Within his net.

An' yet I'm no jist vera sure
 But what in that damp corner there,
 E'en sic a rascal has a lair
 A' bluid-besmear'd,
 Sae billy, thou hadst best tak care
 An' no gae near't.

But art thou no a bardie wicht,
 Upon the poet's page to licht,
 Anxious, 'twad seem, to get a sicht
 O' what he's writin',
 Or help him ocht that's wrang to wricht
 In his inditin'.

Thou'lt aiblins at some famous college
 Hae pickit up the usefu' knowledge,
 That when auld Winter strips the foliage
 Frae bush and tree,
 He lea'es withouten doors nae spoilage
 For sic as thee.

Speaks thus to thee far-seeing lear—
 "Ne'er tempt the chill November air,
 But court the hospitable care
 O' human kind,
 Whaur cozie biel an' wholesome fare
 Thou'rt sure to find."

Canst tell whaur hae thy cronies gane,
 An' left thee here thy leafu' lane?
 Is it for them that sad refrain

I hear thee drone ?
Or is it but thy common strain—
Thy native tone ?

Is't but thy instinct's powerfu' spell
Instructs thee how to guide thyself ?
But wherefore ask ; thou winna tell
Or hilt or hair o't,
And sae wi' thee we'll let it dwell,
We'll mak nae mair o't.

An' yet sic things I'd like to ken,
Sin' 'tis affirm'd 'mang sons o' men
That them wha try but lear to fen,
Thrive but richt kittle ;
Yet some on books great labour spen',
An' profit little.

Here's I mysel hae something read,
But for the knowledge that I've made
I'm fley't there's little to be said ;
An' less the better—
To laurel croon this simple head
Was ne'er a debtor.

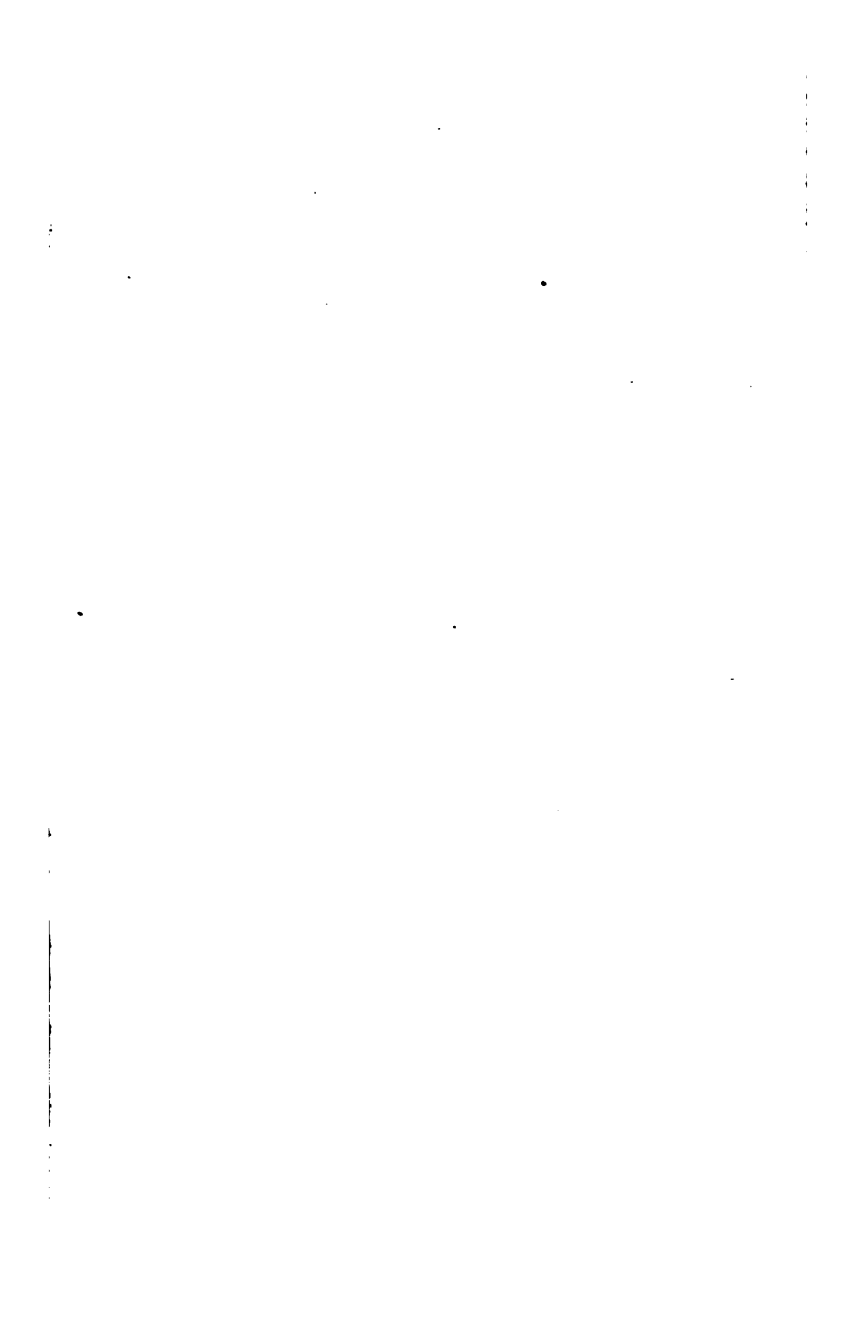
As for my wisdom, och-on-ee !
Witness me haverin' to a flee,
Or on some theme o' sic degree
Wearin' my time ;
Syne kecklin' to mysel' wi' glee
Outowre my rhyme.

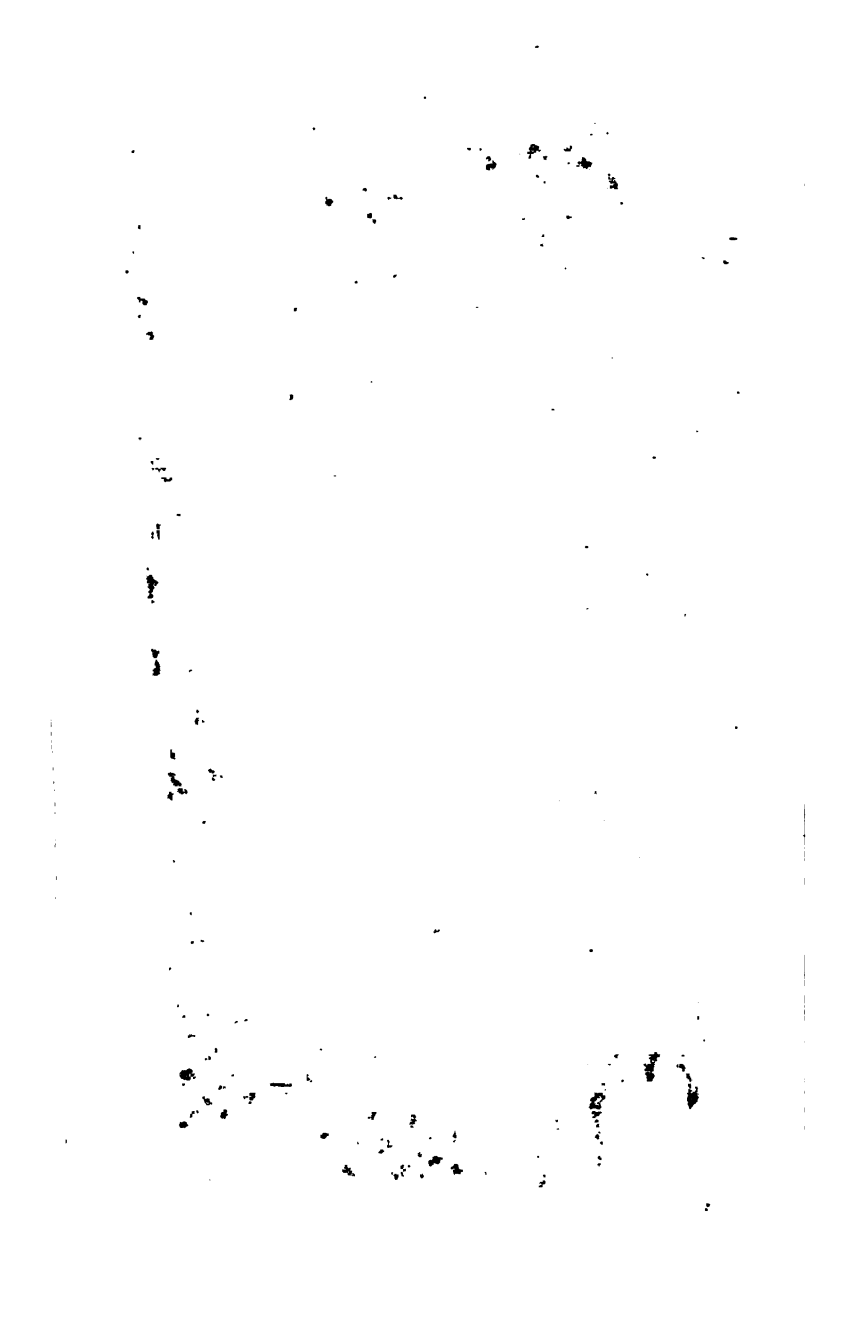
Sic themes best fit our humble muse ;
An' though proud savans may abuse
Us baith, puir flee, an' stern refuse
 To read the same,
Jist let them frown, we'll knit our broos
 As well as them.

Ay, in our play o' life's wee game,
We'll daff at times as weel as them,
An' thae hae nae richt to defame
 Our choice o' sport ;
They please themselves, we'll dae the same.
 Nor thank them for't.

Sae dance awa my sprichtly flee,
I'm nane asham'd to crack to thee,
For wide soe'er our lots may be
 In time that's comin',
The present hour for thee an' me
 Has much in common.

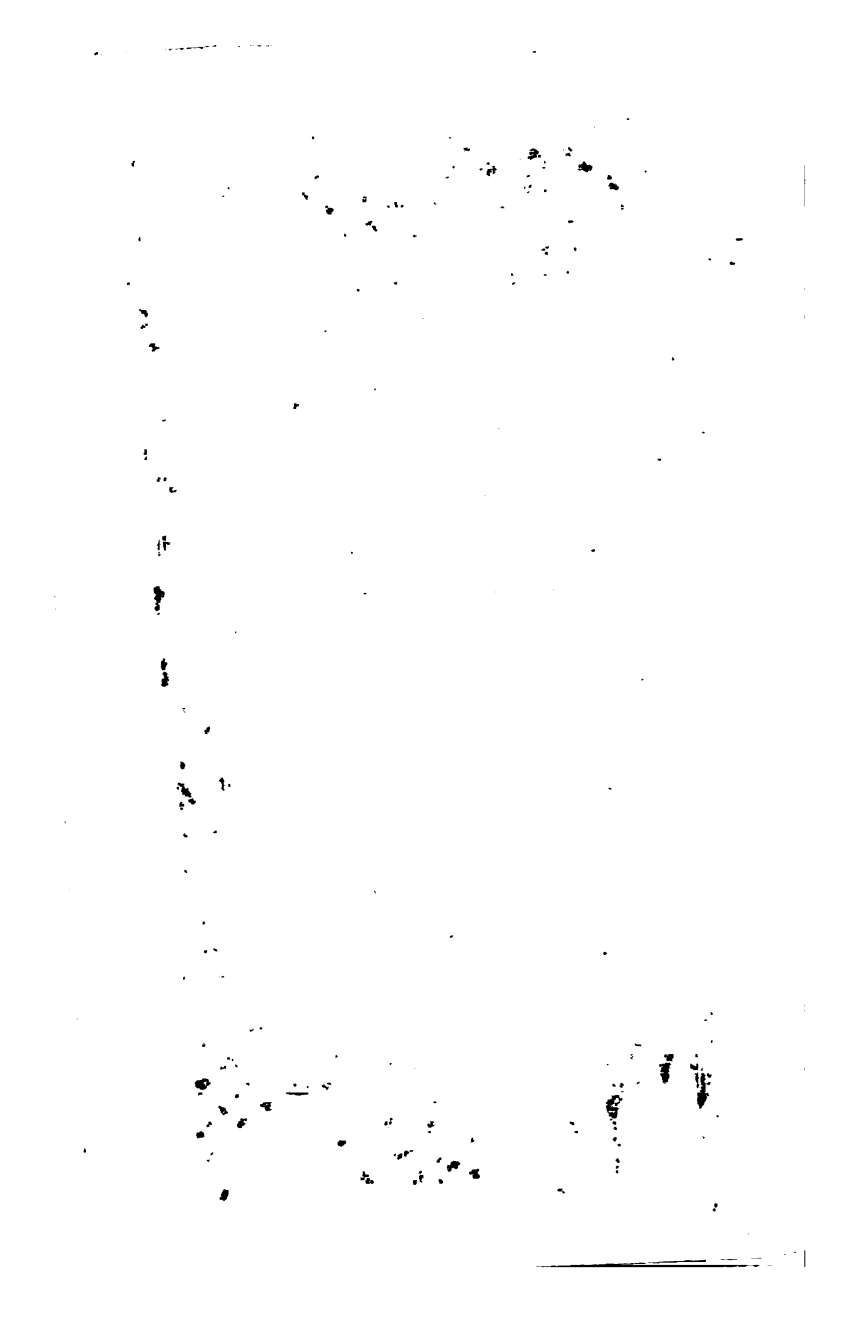


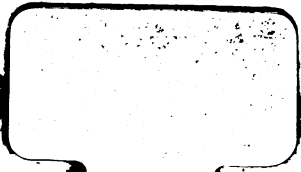


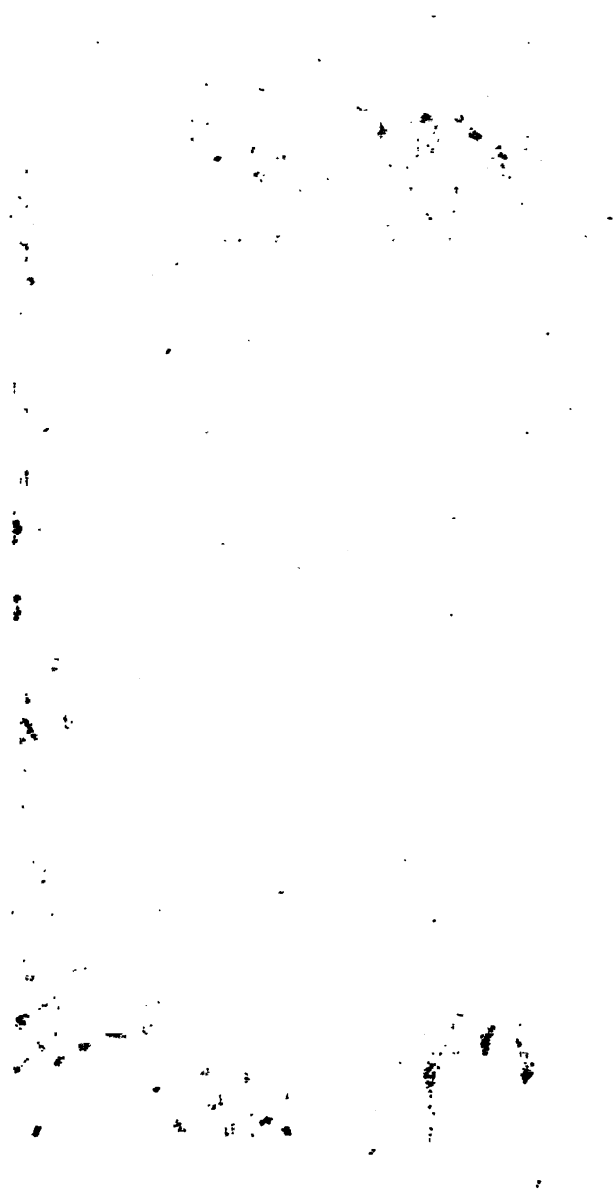


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